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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND

VOL. I.

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THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND

FROM THE LANDING OF CÆSAR
TO THE REIGN OF VICTORIA

BY
EMILY COOPER

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.



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P R E F A C E.

FOR several years, during which the study of English history has been my favourite pursuit, it has appeared to me that whilst some periods have been brought into brighter light (of late) through the researches of fascinating writers, there is still room for a connected narrative including more characteristic details than are contained in ordinary abridgments. To trace the course by which our country has emerged from barbarism into general freedom and comparative enlightenment has been to me a most interesting task. Every work of this kind must be in great measure a compilation, whether derived in part from early records, or relying on the authority of able writers. My continual recourse to the works of Hallam, Freeman, Macaulay, and other historians, may have led me occasionally to borrow their language somewhat freely, but numerous references to their pages indicate at the same time the authorities which I have consulted and the sources whence the reader may obtain fuller information.

The division into separate reigns appears to me more distinct, for those at least not well acquainted with the course of events, than the sections adopted by Mr. Green, in his learned and valuable compendium. In the spelling of proper names I have followed the examples of Lingard and Hallam.

A short Appendix to the First Volume contains a sketch of the life of St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, and some information concerning the first promulgation of Christianity in the British islands, which may, I hope, be interesting to my readers.

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HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT BRITAIN.

THE first history of a country is usually written by its invaders. Savages write no account of themselves. They have frequently a rude poetry recording the deeds of their great men, floating on the memory and forming their national chronicle; but their real condition and abode are first described by the pen of a conqueror, and their wild freedom must have been invaded before they advance towards a more civilised state.

Thus it was with the ancient inhabitants of our country. 'The first traces of our national history must be sought not in Britain but in Germany; in the reports given by Cæsar and Tacitus of the tribes which they knew.'¹

Even long before the Romans reached Britain, the Phœnician adventurers who resorted to Spain for metals had heard that tin might be found in Cornwall, and sailed over to the 'Cassiterides,' or Tin-islands, supposed by antiquaries to be the Scilly Isles; but according to a late writer, St. Michael's Mount, near Penzance, more exactly corresponds with the description first given by a Roman geographer. Whatever may be left to conjecture, it is interesting to believe, with Mr. Merivale, that 'the bare brown mountain called Carn Menellis,' near Falmouth, 'has never rested from the strokes of the miner's pick, nor the neighbouring creeks from the dash of the trader's

¹ The words of Professor Stubbs, quoted by Mr. Freeman. See Essay in 'Fortnightly Review,' September, 1871.

oar, since first the old Phœnicians came.'¹ Far from extending knowledge of the British Isles, the merchants jealously concealed the exact position of the shore whence they obtained their treasure; and as the Mediterranean was long the boundary of naval adventure, Britain still remained nearly unknown.

In the year B.C. 55, this island was first revealed to the Roman world by the invasion of Julius Cæsar. After his conquest of Gaul, which then comprised the France of a later age, with Switzerland and other lands adjoining, Cæsar was induced to cross the Channel. He desired to revenge on Britain the assistance which British chiefs had rendered to the Gauls.

Cæsar must have planned the expedition with eager curiosity, for he relates that he found in Gaul none who could satisfactorily answer his questions concerning the size of the island or the condition of its inhabitants. It appeared that the southern coast only had been visited for the sake of traffic.² It was in August, fifty-five years before the Christian era, that Cæsar set sail for Britain. The Britons were aware of his intention, and mustered in force to oppose him. As Cæsar approached the shore, he beheld the cliffs covered by numbers of armed men, and, altering his course to avoid a combat, is said to have landed where now stands the town of Deal. The natives boldly followed his course, even urging their horses into the waves, and with loud cries bade defiance to the invaders.

The Romans were at first dismayed by the frantic appearance of the islanders; but, after a short pause, a Roman standard-bearer, calling on his comrades to follow him, leaped into the sea, and on landing, they soon overcame the undisciplined enemy. But the Britons were not disposed to yield; they sent messengers in different directions to represent to their countrymen that the Romans were few in number, and to implore help in repelling them. They even ventured to attack the Roman camp, though without success.

Nevertheless, after a three weeks' sojourn in Kent, Cæsar judged his force insufficient for the conquest of Britain, and withdrew to Gaul, where he spent the winter in preparing a second expedition. He embarked again in the spring, transporting across the Straits a large body of foot soldiers, and

¹ Merivale's 'Historical Studies;' 'Antiquities of Cornwall,' p. 380.

² Cæsar, 'De Bello Gallico,' lib. iv. c. 20. The exact spot where Cæsar landed has been much discussed, other points of the coast having been named besides Deal. See Professor Long's edition of 'Cæsar,' p. 274.

two thousand horsemen, in more than eight hundred ships. The Britons, unable to resist such troops, retired to the shelter of their woods. The Romans again occupied their former encampment, and were not molested. Soon after their landing, about forty of their vessels were destroyed by a storm. Cæsar ordered that the rest should be drawn to shore beyond the reach of the tide, and be surrounded by a mound; after which precaution he marched in pursuit of the Britons.

Cæsar has described the Britons as brave and dexterous combatants, often successful in slight encounters. They separated into small bands within hail of each other, watched for the approach of the enemy, cut off stragglers, and greatly impeded his progress. Their chiefs, we are told, fought from chariots armed with scythes, driving on rough ground and down steep descents with much dexterity. They drove fearlessly along the Roman line, espied every opportunity of breaking the ranks of the enemy, and during the heat of action would run along the poles, leap on the ground, and regain their seats with great skill. The strength and excellence of their horses also excited the admiration of the Romans.

But when, encouraged by the apparent disorder of their assailants, the Britons attempted a regular attack, they suffered so severe a defeat that many of the tribes retired to their homes and laid down their arms in despair. The dissensions of the various native princes now smoothed the way for the Roman arms, and Cæsar soon gained possession of the royal residence of King Cassibelan (Caswallon) near the present town of St. Alban's.

The best habitations were huts built of timber and reeds on a foundation of stone, a hole being left in the centre of the roof to let out the smoke and give light to the inhabitants. Such was the palace of an ancient British king; and a town was a place of defence among woods and marshes, surrounded by a mound and ditch for the security of families and cattle.

The continual wars in which the Britons engaged had taught them early to take measures of defence. Even the rude dwellings just described were found only in the southern part of Britain, where the inhabitants had acquired some degree of civilisation. In another part of the island the Britons lived in forests, or under slight sheds formed of stakes driven into the ground interwoven with wattles, and covered with branches of trees; in the winter they retired into caves in the earth.

They were accustomed to paint themselves, and sometimes to print on their skins figures of animals by using pointed

instruments, applying blue dye to the punctures in order to appear the more terrible in battle. They used shields made of osiers covered with skins, and long heavy swords.

The inhabitants of Kent were the most civilized; they wore cloth dresses either of their own weaving or imported from Gaul, raised corn, and stored it in the cavities of rocks. Cæsar states, in fact, that when he landed on August 26th, the harvest was nearly over. But the tribes of the central and western districts were unskilled in either agriculture or manufactures. Their herds were their sole dependence; like the wandering Tartars, they satisfied their hunger with milk and flesh, and by clothing themselves in skins were enabled to brave the rigour of winter, which, owing to the extent of forests and undrained marshes, must have been much colder than at present. The tribe called by the Romans Caledonians, who inhabited Scotland, were the strongest and fiercest, and principally supported themselves by hunting. Cæsar accepted hostages from the defeated princes, fixed the amount of tribute which they should henceforth pay to the Roman Government, and in the month of September of the year succeeding his invasion (B.C. 54) withdrew to Gaul.¹

The Romans boasted of their conquest, yet without actual possession of one foot of British ground, and Cæsar's whole expedition has been considered by some as a failure. It is much more probable that he completely succeeded in his main object of cutting off British supplies from Gaul.²

It was the descriptions of Cæsar and of other writers whose works have perished that first called the attention of the Roman world to this remote island and its inhabitants, awakening much curiosity. Some of his more marvellous accounts have been more or less discussed even down to the present day. Barbarous as he found the people, and although he had penetrated but little way into the country, Cæsar announced³ the existence of a class of wise men, called 'Druids,' whose office was the direction of religious ceremonies, the instruction of the people, and the cure of diseases. The name of 'Druid' was derived from the oak, their sacred tree, and the Druids dwelt in solitary huts among the forests. They wore white robes at religious celebrations; mistletoe, their sacred plant, was cut with a golden knife from an oak, and two white heifers were slain as a sacrifice.

Bards were described as forming a class of this singular

¹ De Bell. Gall. v. 23.

² Ib. iv. 20.

³ Ib. vi. 13.

priesthood. They sang the praise of heroes in war, and transmitted their notable deeds by memory to posterity. Every chieftain was accompanied to battle by a bard, who sounded his harp when the troops were ready to engage. With these descriptions there were others less agreeable to dwell upon. The Druids were said to believe that human sacrifices were acceptable to the Deity, and burned their victims in immense osier cages. In succeeding ages it became customary to call the large rough stones found frequently in circles, or standing in the form of a huge altar, Druidical remains, and to believe that on these the Druids made their human sacrifices, or there buried their dead. Near some of the monuments, called cromlechs, buried treasures and human remains have been found, which prove indeed that they had been chosen as burial-places, but give no proof of the cause or process of their erection, which still remains an unsolved mystery. To call Stonehenge and other stupendous monuments 'Druidical,' is, as has been lately well observed, only to give them a name, without explaining their connection with the shadowy past. No notice of this great Druidical order (existing, according to Roman writers, both in Gaul and Britain) appears in the annals of the first Christian missionaries who settled on the British shores. Yet they have left descriptions of the Norse superstitions, and of the Magi, who pretended to have power over winds and waves. The Druidical rites, therefore, and the monuments assigned to them, are involved in mystery which no research has yet penetrated; but of the Roman dominion in Britain, and of its extent, substantial proofs remain.¹

Second Invasion of Britain, A.D. 43.

It was not till nearly a hundred years after Cæsar's invasion that, in the reign of Claudius, the actual conquest of Britain was begun, after which the Romans continued to hold our island more or less under subjection for nearly four hundred years.

The tribe which inhabited South Wales, called the Silures, are reported as among the last to be subdued by the Romans,

¹ Mr. Burton explained his reasons for distrusting the historical conjectures respecting the Druids in an article published in the July number of the 'Edinburgh Review,' 1863. See his conclusions in the first vol. of his 'History of Scotland,' pp. 218-227, and elsewhere. Mr. Freeman considers it more reasonable to believe the cromlechs the work of the totally unknown inhabitants who lived in England before the Celts or any other people of whom we have knowledge. Although 'mistaken for altars, they are graves' ('Old English History,' p. 7).

and on a lofty hill in Shropshire, called *Caer Caradoc*, have been seen traces of their fortifications. There it was that a brave chief named *Caractacus* (*Caradoc*), after long resistance, was taken prisoner and sent with his family to Rome. The aspect of a barbarian prince who had for some years defied the Roman arms excited interest in the imperial city. *Caractacus* is said to have expressed wonder that men who possessed such palaces at home should think it worth while to contend for the poor hovels of Britain. His fortitude and intrepid bearing won the admiration of his conquerors, and *Claudius*, to his honour, gave him his liberty. The Roman general *Suetonius* resolved, a few years afterwards, to attack the isle of *Anglesea*, which is said to have been the principal residence of the Druids or Magicians by whose influence the Britons were encouraged to prolonged resistance. When the Roman soldiers approached the sacred isle, and beheld the shore lined with priests and priestesses with lighted torches and flowing hair, they are said to have been seized with superstitious terror; but their general urged them on and the victory was easy. The power of the Druids never recovered that blow, and their woods and altars were laid low by the conquerors.¹

But not so soon did the brave islanders give up all resistance. *Boadicea* (*Boduc*) queen of the Eastern *Iceni*, had been scourged by Romans, who grasped her inheritance, and the tribes were excited to a general revolt by her wrongs. A great victory secured the Roman domination, and under the milder administration of succeeding generals the Britons became reconciled to the yoke.

Extension of the Conquest under Agricola, A.D. 78.

The period during which *Agricola* commanded the legions in Britain was one of wider and of more kindly rule than that of preceding generals. In the southern portion of the island the chieftains left their forests to find protection near the Roman stations, and began to acquire a taste for arts and comforts hitherto unknown to them. It was from *Agricola's* conquests in Northern Britain that Scotland first emerged from darkness into the light of history.²

As the Roman troops advanced along the eastern coast, they were accompanied by their fleet laden with necessaries. A great battle, in which the brave *Galgacus* undertook to defend the passage of the *Grampian Mountains*, resulted in a decisive

¹ Lingard, i. 24.

² Burton's 'History of Scotland.'

victory for the Romans; and Agricola sought to preserve so hardly won a conquest by building a range of forts between the Firths of Forth and Clyde. Yet the fierce tribes of Scotland, although repeatedly defeated, were never vanquished by the Romans.

We read of them as Picts and Scots; the first (so named probably by the Romans on account of their painted skins, a custom which they retained much longer than the Southern Britains) were Caledonians, or people of Scotland. The Scots were Irishmen who crossed the narrow sea in great numbers, and joined with the Picts against the Romans and the people of South Britain.¹ It is related by Tacitus in the 'Life of Agricola,' that the Roman fleet sailing round the northern coast, first discovered Britain to be an island, and in consequence the Orkneys were added to the list of Roman triumphs.

About thirty years after the time of Agricola the state of Britain was so far endangered that the Emperor Hadrian was induced to visit it. After having repulsed the barbarians, he began a great military work (A.D. 120), a ditch and rampart extending across the island from the Solway Frith on the west to the mouth of the Tyne on the eastern coast, of which vestiges even yet remain.² This great barrier of defence was more than seventy miles long, and consisted of several works, besides the stone wall scaling the heights and descending into the hollows of that rugged country, through which there was no road till within quite modern times. At intervals were towers, and at greater intervals large fortresses of defence; and the excellence of the workmanship is proved by the durability of the remaining fragments. In the sixteenth century this wall was said to be sixteen feet high; at first probably it was higher, affording real protection before the time of artillery.³ Another barrier was built on the isthmus between the Firths of Forth and Clyde, by order of the Emperor Antoninus, about the year 139.⁴ The people of Scotland have continued to look with reverence on the relics of the Roman Empire. 'Every peasant,' says Mr. Burton, 'knows the Roman camp' or 'the Roman road' of

¹ Lingard, i. 50; and Burton, i. 208.

² How much of this work was done in the reign of Hadrian is disputed; but, says Mr. Burton, it cannot be doubted that it was then begun.

³ Mr. Burton thinks that it may have been from 18 to 20 feet high, and the accompanying ditch from 10 to 12 feet deep.

⁴ It was long the general belief that Hadrian only raised the earthworks which form the southern barrier, and that the stone wall was the work of Severus about a century later. Mr. Burton explains his reasons for thinking that the whole design was raised in the time of Hadrian, leaving nothing to be added by Severus but restorations or improvements (p. 24).

his district; but the remains of Roman dwelling-houses and baths are not nearly so common in Scotland as in the southern part of the island, where specimens of beautifully tessellated floors, found in London and elsewhere, testify to the luxury and love of art of the superior inhabitants. Two towns in England were ranked as *Municipia*, enjoying peculiar privileges; these were York and Verulam, or St. Alban's. Wherever the name of an existing town ends in -chester, as Winchester, the name may be considered as derived from the Roman occupation. Till the fifth century, Britain remained a Roman province, held under strong military rule. But before that time the Goths, whom the Romans had repeatedly conquered, were increasing in strength, and the Roman government was warned of the necessity of recalling its legions. The word Saxons had been already applied by Roman writers to designate Scandinavian pirates, who molested the shores of Gaul and Britain.¹

In the year 367, the danger in which Britain was placed by hostile inroads caused the Emperor Valentinian to send over the best part of the troops in Gaul under Theodosius, who entered London in triumph. He drove the marauders out of the Roman province, and began to rebuild the cities and forts which had been destroyed. But although at times a daring British officer aspired to independence, the Romanised Britons had become a feeble people, relying on the protection of their masters. Yet Britain supplied a warlike part of the Roman legions abroad, who found it so difficult to return home that a large body of them settled in Gaul and founded the province of Bretagne. When the empire recalled its forces, the southern islanders sent continual petitions for more military help. At last, in the year 409, records the Saxon Chronicle, compiled long afterwards, 'the Goths took the city of Rome by storm, and after that the Romans never ruled in Britain.'

The year after this, Honorius wrote his celebrated letter to the cities of Britain, warning them that henceforth they must depend on their own strength.

In the year A.D. 418, as it is chronicled, 'the Romans collected all the treasures which were in Britain, and some they laid in the earth so that no one has since been able to find them, and some they carried with them into Gaul.'

¹ To repel these invaders the command of a fleet was given to Carausius, with the title of Count of the Saxon Shore, but without success; the pirates obtained his indulgence by yielding a portion of their spoil, and Carausius, during about four years, maintained authority in Britain in defiance of Rome (A.D. 293-7).—Lingard, i. 42; Burton, i. 44.

The Roman occupation, though extending over a long period, left less durable traces in Britain than in Spain and Gaul, where the Romans infused their language and transmitted their customs. The Britons adhered to their own tongue, and as soon as the legions withdrew the country began to relapse into its former barbarism. The laws of Rome perished, to be introduced again in times succeeding the Norman Conquest.¹ Constantine's adopted Christianity had in his reign become the nominal religion of Britain, as of the Empire. The civilisation was foreign and the Christianity was feeble. The former departed irrevocably with the nation which had introduced it; the latter retained its hold upon the native tribes, until afterwards, embraced within the missionary efforts of Augustine, it survived to a grander future.

Among the more durable constructions which could not be effaced for ages should be mentioned the excellent Roman roads. The principal of these, known by the name of Watling Street, beginning at Richborough, on the coast of Kent, passed by Canterbury, Rochester, and London to St. Alban's, and on entering Wales divided into two branches, one of which ended at Holyhead; the other extended to the Tyne and into Scotland.²

¹ Freeman's 'History of the Norman Conquest,' i. 517.

² Late explorers have discovered the massive ruins of a bridge at the place where the wall was met by the river Tyne. 'If,' says Mr. Burton, 'we judge from the strength of its foundation, the bridge must have been a noble structure.'—'History of Scotland,' i. 23.

CHAPTER II.

ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD—THE HEPTARCHY.

A.D. 428-871.

As early as the middle of the second century after Christ, historical notices relate of depredations upon the coast of the British isles by pirates from countries north of the Elbe, known under the names of Saxons, Jutes, Angles, and afterwards of Danes. The name of 'Vikings,' by which their leaders were called, has been interpreted to signify Sea-kings; but it appears derived from *Vic, a bay*, and it was from the bays of Scandinavia that these rovers put off to plunder any land within their reach.¹ During the Roman occupation, the officer Carausius had been deputed to guard the British coast from ravage; but the pirates are reported to have purchased his forbearance and to have continued their incursions. 'It is certain that droves of them came over' to attack various parts of the Empire, long before the memorable time when tradition states that Vortigern, king of South-eastern Britain, invited the Saxons to form a settlement in his kingdom to assist him in defending Kent from other enemies.

Whether invited or not, the Norsemen came; they settled in the Isle of Thanet, which was at that time separated from the rest of Kent by a wider stream than at present. Their leaders were called Hengist and Horsa. During six years the alliance appears to have prospered; but the new-comers liked Kent so well that they invited more of their northern brethren, until Thanet was crowded with strangers. Hostilities then soon took place, in which the Britons were overcome, so that they fled in terror to London. But although the Saxons had made piracy their pursuit, they eagerly formed settlements when an opportunity occurred, and soon became expert in the

¹ Burton's 'History of Scotland,' i. 337, and note from Mr. Robertson. The year A.D. 428, according to Mr. Burton, is 'now universally admitted to be the right date' of the Saxon descent upon Kent, which was formerly believed to be 449.

simple arts of life. In a few years' time they took permanent possession of the southern and eastern coasts, and the eastern province gained the name of East Anglia from the settlement of Angles there. The Britons did not yield their lands without severe struggles; but as they were a scattered people ruled by quarrelsome chiefs, they could not combine in sufficient strength to resist their foes. Poetical legends have extolled King Arthur as the bravest opponent of the Saxons, but these are among the fables of an unhistorical age. It is uncertain where Arthur lived, or when he died. Glastonbury, however, claimed his tomb. The Roman cities fell gradually into decay, and the Britons¹ were either enslaved by the Saxons or retired to the most remote districts. Wales, Cornwall, Ireland, and Scotland retained the old language of Britain with some variations.

From a national British song preserved in the Welsh archæology, Thierry quotes these words: 'After having subdued our enemies we all rejoiced together over our victory; but alas for the day when we accepted their friendship! alas for Vortigern and his cowardly advisers!'

The British women were spared by the conquerors; for the male inhabitants there appears to have been no alternative but death, emigration, or slavery.²

As historians have enumerated seven or eight petty kingdoms ruled by successive Anglo-Saxon settlers, this is usually called the period of the Heptarchy. Of these divisions, Kent and Sussex, although the smallest, were the most civilized; the East Saxons gave the name of Essex to their province. Northumbria extended across England from the Forth to the Tees.³ The interior of the island, bounded by the Welsh mountains, was termed Mercia. The kingdom of Wessex, bounded on the north by the Thames and the Severn, and reaching westward to Cornwall, was founded by the Saxon chief Cerdic, who died in A.D. 534. The king of Wessex became in time the ruler of all England, and the honourable appellation of 'Son of Cerdic,' was given to all the Anglo-Saxon kings who derived from that lineage their hereditary claim. East Anglia has been mentioned already. While these petty kingdoms lasted, the title of Bretwalda, or sovereign ruler, was given to the most powerful; but the extent of his influence appears uncertain, for these

¹ In the romance of Arthur and the Knights of his Round Table, all is fairy-land, taken from 'that age of chivalry which did not dawn in the rest of Europe till some centuries later.'—Burton, 174.

² See the Introduction of Freeman's 'History of the Norman Conquest.'

³ Northumbria was at one time divided: Bernicia being the northern portion, and Deira equivalent to Yorkshire.

chiefs were far from forming a confederation with an acknowledged head. The distance of these settlements and the nature of the country, covered with forests interspersed with bogs, besides the differences of speech, barred communication. The predominance of any one king was due to success in war, and was gained or lost in turn.¹

Towards the close of the sixth century, the authority of Ethelbert, king of Kent, was admitted by all the Anglo-Saxon princes south of the Humber, although the extent of his power is left in obscurity. The name of Ethelbert became illustrious through his conversion to Christianity. It is said that there were Christians in Britain at a very early period, but that it is impossible to discover when Christianity was first introduced.² The Saxons were heathens; but Ethelbert had married a Christian lady, Bertha of Paris, who was accompanied to England by a bishop, sent expressly 'to preserve her faith.' According to an interesting tradition, Pope Gregory, some years before he became the head of the church, had seen 'a bright-haired company, with complexion unlike those of Italy, exposed for sale in the Roman slave-market.' Inquiring whence they came, he was told that they were 'Angli,' or English, on which he exclaimed that they had indeed the appearance of 'angeli,' *angels*, and ought to be rescued from paganism, that they might be angels in heaven.³ The incident was not forgotten by Pope Gregory, and he gave the monk Augustine a commission to travel to England with forty companions, and attempt the conversion of King Ethelbert, the most powerful Anglo-Saxon of the time.

The missionaries were so much appalled by the difficulties of the journey, that, after they had proceeded a short distance, they stopped to ask the Pope's permission to desist from the undertaking. But Gregory urged them to persist, and wrote to the king of the Franks requesting him to grant the clergy his aid. Tidings now reached Ethelbert that forty strangers had landed in Thanet, who declared that they had a joyful message to deliver. The king, perhaps prepared for their arrival, desired that entertainment be provided, and then he agreed to grant them an interview. His own priests had assured him that he would be safe from magical arts if he met the strangers in the open air, and it was under an oak that the Anglo-Saxon king first encountered the Italian clergy. Already the Roman

¹ See Kemble's 'Saxons in England,' ii. 6.

² Lingard, i. 44-75.

³ Bede refers to this story as a tradition. Wordsworth has made it the theme of his thirteenth ecclesiastical sonnet.

ritual gave solemnity to the ministrations of the priests. A silver cross, and a banner on which was painted the figure of the Saviour, were borne before Augustine; the monks followed, singing an anthem in alternate verses. Ethelbert, seated on the bare ground, surrounded by his wild soldiers, listened to their address as explained by an interpreter, and answered that, although not prepared himself to renounce the belief of his fathers, yet, as the missionaries had come so far to teach his subjects, he would provide for their maintenance and allow them freedom to preach. The monks were lodged in the ancient church of St. Martin at Canterbury, built before the Romans finally left Britain, and they were well received by the citizens. At Easter, Ethelbert publicly announced his conversion; he was baptized, and several thousands of his subjects soon followed his example. The king, says Bede, compelled none to embrace Christianity, for he had learned from his instructors that the service of Christ ought to be voluntary, not by compulsion.¹

Augustine, who was now called the Bishop of Canterbury, founded there an abbey, which became the principal seat of learning in the South of England. A modern missionary college now stands on its site, which bears his name.

A few years afterwards, missionaries crossed the Thames to preach to the East Saxons, 'whose metropolis,' says Bede, 'is London, which is situated on the bank of the river, and is the mart of many nations resorting to it by sea and land.'² Thus in England, as in other countries, the Christian priesthood introduced learning, sanctified marriage, and checked in some degree the former sway of brute force. The clergy became the principal expounders of the law, though they did not yet venture in these rude times to declare that law should be equally administered to men of all ranks. Ethelbert's code of laws, compiled by the advice of the missionaries, established punishment by fines, distributed according to the rank of the person injured. The life of a nobleman was valued at a far higher rate than that of a peasant; and it was decreed that when a murder had been committed, one part of the fine should be given as a compensation to the family of the murdered man, the other part to the king, according to the common usage of the northern nations. By the introduction of

¹ Bede, who appears by this language to have anticipated the wisdom of a far later age, did not write till the next century after this event. He is said to have been born about the year 674.

² Bohn's edition of Bede's History, p. 72.

Christianity, England was first brought 'within the pale of the general political society of Europe.'¹ In England alone among the nations of the West the Romans had left no traces of their language; but the Latin prayer-book made Latin a necessary study among the clergy. Ethelbert died in the fifty-sixth year of his reign. The old Chroniclers describe with satisfaction the successive conversions of kings and their subjects who followed his example. They praise the king of Mercia for his liberal endowment of Peterborough Cathedral, that it might attract pilgrims unable to extend their journeys to Rome. Several kings subscribed with the sign of the cross the king of Mercia's deed of gift—a mode of signature at this time generally used by those unable to write. Pope Gregory had counselled that the temples of the old Pagan worship should not be destroyed but consecrated.

At the west of London was a small island among the morasses overgrown with thickets, called by the Anglo-Saxons the 'Isle of Thorns.' A temple had been raised to Apollo on this desolate spot, and there Sebert, king of the East-Saxons, after his conversion, dedicated a church to St. Peter. The busy city of Westminster now stands on Thorney island, and Westminster Abbey has succeeded to Sebert's church.² Paganism long lurked in the more sequestered districts. Towards the end of the seventh century, the zealous Bishop Wilfrid undertook the conversion of the Pagans of Sussex, who were in danger of dying of famine, and, from want of the implements for fishing, were unable to catch any fish 'but eels' from the abounding sea and river. By teaching these poor men to fish, the good bishop won their hearts and prepared them for his instruction. He founded a monastery at Selsey, near Chichester, for which the king of Sussex gave him the 'lands and the men,' the workmen being doubtless in bondage, and he is said to have given freedom to two hundred and fifty slaves.

During the period preceding the Norman Conquest, there was a large class of slaves, consisting both of the vanquished Britons and of Anglo-Saxon prisoners of war, or men degraded to slavery as a punishment for crime; others also voluntarily surrendered their liberty for food. Famine was indeed of frequent occurrence. When crops failed, no ships brought corn from distant lands. Families were broken up, and many peasants became outcasts, for no part of England raised more grain than was sufficient for its own people, and the roads were unfit for

¹ Freeman's 'History of the Norman Conquest,' i. 36.

² Palgrave's 'History of the Anglo-Saxons,' p. 62.

its transport. At a time when there were no manufactures, except those in which the inmates of private dwellings were employed, land and its produce constituted wealth and power. The free people consisted of Eorls and Ceorls, the men of noble and ignoble descent. The Danish word 'Jarl,' also expressing noble birth, denoted an owner of land.

The term 'Eorl,' or noble, the highest rank under the Anglo-Saxon kings, was afterwards changed to Earl.

The condition of the ceorls, which appears to have varied at different times, has been supposed by some to have been the same as that of 'villeins,' who were not able to leave the place of their birth or to withdraw from the service of their lord.¹ But the original ceorl was a citizen and a soldier, taking part in the public solemnities, and commonly holding land under a noble, and paying taxes either in time or labour. The condition of ceorls had become more degraded before the time of the Norman Conquest.² The estate of the earl supported numerous dependents, who gave their labour for food and protection. Shepherds and swineherds lived for great part of the year in the open air near the flocks which they tended. The spinner and weaver, glover and shoemaker, smith and carpenter, were all menials attached to the noble family.

The 'Thane,' or nobleman, frequently fixed his abode on the river-side, and protected it from depredators by a slight mound of earth, surrounded by the sheds of the poor inhabitants who gained a scanty living on his land, or at times received charity from a neighbouring monastery. In this way arose the town.³ The striking contrast between the past and the present prospect from Pendle-hill, in North Lancashire, at an interval of ten centuries, arrests the observation of the modern antiquarian. Where the eye now enjoys the view of thriving towns and villages, the castle and the modern mansion, parks and enclosures, 'which have driven sterility almost to the summit of the fells,' the beholder would at that remote period have seen only vast tracts of forest and stagnant bogs, 'where the wild ox, the stag, and the wolf had scarcely learned the supremacy of man.' A few insulated patches of culture encircled wretched cabins, among which stood 'one rude mansion of wood, rising proudly

¹ Palgrave's 'Rise of the English Commonwealth,' p. 67.

² Freeman, i. 87 and 89. *Note.*—The difference of rank modified the penalty exacted for murder. The 'were,' or legal value of life was, for an ealdorman twice, for a king six times the 'were' of a royal thane. The persons and properties of the higher classes were therefore better secured than those of their inferiors.—Lingard, i. 345.

³ Kemble's 'Saxons in England,' ii. 302.

above the rest, where the Saxon lord, surrounded by his bondsmen, enjoyed a rude and solitary independence, owning no superior but his sovereign.¹

The mansion of an Anglo-Saxon lord, without a chimney or glass windows, must have been far less comfortable than a modern cottage.

The best edifices were built for the offices of religion. Monasteries, with schools adjoining, were planted in the century succeeding Augustine's arrival, and sometimes in the most secluded places. Lands belonging to these monasteries were probably better cultivated than others; and music, arithmetic, and astronomy were introduced into England in the seventh century by missionaries from Rome. The monks practised the art of healing, and employed part of their time in copying books. The Latin language was perpetuated in their schools, and the connection between Rome and Britain was thus renewed in a new form.²

Some remains still exist at Jarrow, in Durham, of that monastery in which Bede wrote the history afterwards translated into Anglo-Saxon by King Alfred. Bede was the first English historian. Allowing for the rude age in which he wrote, his work has received great praise as a trustworthy chronicle.³

Another monastery stood on the lonely Holy Island; but soon fresh incursions of the northern barbarians swept the shores, and effaced for a time signs of culture.

The general community remained fierce and turbulent; drunkenness and robbery prevailed among all classes, and frequently disgraced even the clergy.

It would be waste of time to dwell on the numerous instances of treachery and murder occurring in Northumberland during more than a hundred years, while Mercia and Wessex were gradually increasing in strength. A wild race of nearly the same origin as the Saxons dwelt in Jutland and on the coast of Norway, supporting themselves chiefly by the pillage of all cultivated lands within reach. Their mode of life has

¹ Whitaker's 'History of Whalley,' p. 135. Lancashire was not a separate shire till after the reign of Edward the Confessor. Before that time the northern part was joined with Yorkshire, the southern was held by petty thanes little above the rank of serfs, under the king.—Freeman's 'Norman Conquest,' iv. 490.

² Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 355.

³ Bede spent all his life in the convent of Jarrow, where he devoted his time to study and education.—Lingard, i. 113. Alcuin also was a native of the city of York, and master there of a grammar school which attracted crowds of students from Gaul and Germany. The Emperor Charlemagne heard of his fame, and induced him to reside at his court.

been handed down to us. The chief's eldest son inherited his father's land, his younger sons maintained themselves by their ships and swords in a life of rapine. The Danes, or Northmen, who had probably heard of the prosperity of Britain, came to view the land about the year 787. They killed a magistrate who encountered them, securing sufficient booty to encourage them very soon to renew their incursions. These, indeed, from this time form the chief subject of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The thanes of Wessex exercised the old privilege of their race, the free election of their kings. They confined their choice to the descendants of Cerdic, the founder of their kingdom, but their Witenagemot, or popular assembly, had the right of choosing the most worthy of the royal family. Egbert had been driven out by enemies, and found employment for three years in the armies of Charlemagne; but, when the throne of Wessex fell vacant, he returned, and was unanimously acknowledged as king of the West Saxons. He soon rendered himself the most powerful of the kings, adding Kent and Sussex to his dominions; but the Danes made frequent descents upon the coast, in 832 entering the mouth of the Dart with five-and-thirty ships. The West Saxons fled before them, and Egbert summoned an assembly at London to consider the best measures of defence. On the Cornish coast the Northmen found descendants of the Britons, whom they induced to take arms, but at Hengstone Hill, the West Saxons under Egbert's command obtaining a decisive victory, the Cornish rebels were crushed, and the invaders compelled to take to their ships. This was Egbert's last exploit. He died in the following year, after a long and fortunate reign, in possession of the honourable title of the eighth Bretwalda.¹

After Egbert's death his son Ethelwulf succeeded to the throne of Wessex, but Kent, Sussex, and Essex fell under the rule of another prince of the same family. In all the Teutonic kingdoms the king's power was established and controlled by the voices of the highest men in the state. In every shire there was a county court, and in every realm a 'Witenagemot,' or larger assembly, was summoned by the sovereign at stated times of the year to give him advice and assistance. This assembly met upon the death of a king to elect the one of the royal house who was thought the most worthy. The instructions of the deceased sovereign were insufficient to appoint his successor unless supported by their approval. Many charters contain signatures of the Witan, from thirty to sixty in number,

¹ Lingard, i. 145, from 'Saxon Chronicle.'

including those of bishops, ealdormen, and thanes, besides that of the king and sometimes also of the queen.¹ There can be no government without allegiance, either to the law or to the chief, and the tie between a freeman and his lord was held sacred by the Anglo-Saxons. It might be dissolved by mutual consent, or through crime; but while it lasted, the lord was bound to give protection to his 'man,' and the man was pledged to remain faithful to his lord. According to 'the original principle, allegiance depended conditionally on good treatment.'²

If a sense of the danger threatening the whole community could have united all England in a league of defence, it should have been at the time when the Northmen were continually arriving in increasing strength, often attacking at different spots at the same time, dividing their forces. Officers were appointed to watch the coasts most in danger, but in spite of the brave resistance of some of the Anglo-Saxon kings, the pirates had frequently the advantage. For about ten years the Danes ceased invading Britain, preferring to visit provinces on the opposite coast; but in the year 850 a Danish army landed in Thanet, where they wintered, and in the next spring their fleet ascended the Thames, and Canterbury and London were sacked. The Danes were at length encountered at Okeley in Surrey by Ethelwulf at the head of the West Saxons, and his victory, which was confirmed by success in Devonshire and Kent, checked their incursions during the remainder of the reign. It seems strange that the chief king of England could venture on a journey to far distant Rome; but satisfied apparently with the state of his dominions, and excited by curiosity or devotion, Ethelwulf embarked for Italy in the year 855, with his young son Alfred, the best beloved of his children, and a splendid retinue. He visited the principal churches of Gaul, and was entertained by Charles the Bald, king of France, the father of the queen. Ethelwulf died in 858, and was buried at Winchester, the capital of Wessex. His realm was divided between his sons Ethelbald and Ethelbert with the consent of the Witenagemot. Their reigns were short, and Ethelred, the third son of Ethelwulf, succeeded to the throne of Wessex in A.D. 866.

¹ Lingard, i. 337; Freeman, i. 96. The word Witenagemot was compounded from *Witen*, signifying Wise Men, and *gemot*, assembly. The title Ealdorman, whence that of alderman is derived, was given to the sub-king, who ruled a province with the help of a local assembly, and who appears to have been appointed by the king jointly with the Witan.

² Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 293; Palgrave's 'Rise of the English Commonwealth,' p. 504; and Freeman, i. 130.

One of the boldest of the northern pirates, named Ragnar Lodbrog, had spread terror over all the northern shores. He had before ventured up the river Seine and taken Paris, which was only saved from destruction by the payment of an enormous sum. This year he brought ships of unusual size against the coast of Northumbria, but was wrecked. The Northumbrians flew to the spot delighted with the opportunity of crushing their formidable foe, and put Ragnar to a cruel death. Their cruelty had bitter fruits. When the news reached Denmark, Ragnar's sons assembled several thousand warriors, all determined to revenge the death of their chief. The Northmen easily obtained a landing in East Anglia, took the city of York, and overran Northumbria. The monasteries at Jarrow, Durham, Lindisfarne, and Peterborough were destroyed, East Anglia was completely conquered, and Edmund, the king of the East Angles, was put to a cruel death, A.D. 871. He was afterwards revered as a martyr, and the Abbey of St. Edmond's Bury erected to his honour. The Danes surprised the town of Reading, and Ethelred, who opposed them in an engagement of doubtful issue, was wounded and did not long survive. The Danes had now obtained permanent settlements in England.¹

¹ The Danes retained possession of East Anglia; the West-Saxon kings endeavoured to acquire the same lordship over the Danish rulers of that province which they had held before over East-Anglian kings.—Freeman's 'Old English History,' p. 109.

CHAPTER III.

ALFRED, KING OF WESSEX, 871-901—EDWARD THE ELDER—ÆTHELSTAN—EDMUND, EDRED, AND EDWY—EDGAR—ÆTHELRED II.—EDMUND IRONSIDE, 1016.

WHEN, after groping our way through the confused annals of the early English kingdom, we hail the name of a king of whom England is still proud, we reach as it were one of those isles of verdure of which we read in the dreary narratives of African adventure.

Yet Alfred's reign was the time of England's greatest peril, when all the improvements in civilization were threatened with total annihilation by the fierce pirates of the North. Northumberland and East Anglia had become Danish provinces, the head-quarters to which the Danish army retired for rest. Wessex, recently enlarged by the addition of Kent and Sussex, was the only part of England which acknowledged Alfred's rule, and this small kingdom could only be upheld by determined bravery.¹ Alfred, although only twenty-one at his accession, was already favourably known, and the hopes of his subjects revived.

From his brother's funeral he hastened to the battle-field, for the Danes were in Wiltshire, spreading devastation as they advanced. Nine battles were fought in the first year of Alfred's reign, and nine earls and a king were slain. 'The army' is the expression constantly applied by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicler to the Danish force, clear evidence of the awe with which it was regarded. The movements of that army occupy the chronicler's register entirely during some years.

At length, probably by a valuable present, Alfred induced the Danish leaders to leave his dominions; but they still passed the winter in London, which was then included in Mercia.² The

¹ Wessex is said to have comprised seven shires.—See Freeman's 'Old English History,' p. 36.

² Kemble, ii. 333.

repeated inroads of the Danes drove the king of Mercia to despair. He abandoned his throne, and made a pilgrimage to Rome, where he soon died.

Wherever the Danish leader, Halfdane, marched, his course was marked by the smoking ruins of towns and villages. After ravaging the northern border he returned to the western province, and took possession of Exeter.

When, about the fifth century, the Anglo-Saxons had ceased piracy, they began to neglect their ships. Alfred saw the necessity of meeting the Danes on the ocean. He built ships, and succeeded in defending the mouth of the river Ex from a Danish squadron. But although Alfred had twice cleared his dominions from the Danes, and during seven years successfully defended the boundary of the Thames, he was reduced by the strength of the enemy and the weakened attachment of his subjects to the greatest extremity. Too haughty towards the chiefs of the Witenagemot, or too rapid in his projects of reform, as some writers have said, this brave young king became for a time unpopular; and when, in 878, he sent his messenger to the towns and villages to summon the people to arms, he was shocked to find numbers unwilling to join in the defence of their country.¹ Deserted by his subjects while the Danes were rapidly approaching, Alfred concealed himself for a short time in a district near Taunton, in Somersetshire, which, lying amidst the marshes between the rivers Thone and Parret, was afterwards called Ethelingey, or Prince's Island, or the Isle of Athelney. There, according to a favourite tradition, he took refuge in the cottage of a peasant to whom he was unknown, and helped to bake the bread of which he partook. Having fortified his place of concealment against an attack, Alfred lived for some months like a brigand mountaineer, with a small band of followers, occasionally issuing forth to intercept straggling parties of Danes, and returning with the spoils. By degrees the number of his followers increased, and he erected a wooden bridge across the marshes. Meantime another Danish leader, Ubbo, or Hubba, son of the murdered Ragnar, landed on the northern coast of Devonshire, after ravaging the shores of South Wales. There was danger that the kingdom of Wessex would be totally crushed; but a brave ealdorman of Devonshire, named Odun, repelled the invaders, slew the Danish leader and a great number of his followers, and, what was very important in an age of superstition, the mysterious standard of the Raven, which was believed to flap

¹ Thierry's 'History of the Norman Conquest,' i. 108.

its wings as a sign of approaching victory, fell into the hands of the Anglo-Saxons.¹

On receiving the happy news of this victory, Alfred felt that the time for action was come. He invited his subjects to meet him at the eastern extremity of Selwood Forest. 'There came to meet him,' says the Saxon Chronicle, 'all the men of Somerset, and the men of Wiltshire, and that portion of the men of Hampshire which was on the side of the sea, and they were joyful at his presence.'

A great battle took place at Edington, in which both parties fought with the fierce courage natural to determined enemies contending for their dearest rights. The Danes were driven back to their encampment, and after suffering a siege of fourteen days Gothrun, the leader, yielded to the terms imposed by Alfred, that he and his principal chieftains should accept the doctrines of Christianity, should withdraw entirely from Alfred's dominions, and should ratify the treaty by the surrender of hostages. Accordingly, after a few weeks' delay, Gothrun, with thirty of his officers, was baptized near Athelney, by the name of Athelstan, Alfred being his sponsor. In history he still bears his Danish name. The boundaries between the kingdom of Alfred and the Danish possessions were carefully laid down. All the north and east of England, from the point where the great road called Watling Street crossed the Ouse, remained under Danish rule. After this negotiation Gothrun remained for a year in Mercia, and ordered his followers to cultivate the soil. He afterwards retired to his former kingdom of East Anglia, and was so far true to his engagements as to refuse to join a fresh body of Danes who sailed up the Thames.² The ameliorating influence of industry was soon apparent in the settled Danish provinces. The cultivators of the soil soon became its defenders from the attacks of other adventurers; indeed, fifteen years of peace gave Alfred the opportunity of improving the condition of his small and shattered dominions. The defence of the towns was intrusted to their inhabitants, under the direction of the magistrate called the king's *gerafa*, or reeve, and all freemen were required to take occasional military service under the command of the king or the ealdorman of the county. Castles were built to protect the coast, vessels were constructed of a larger size than had been previously in use, and Alfred frequently accompanied his naval officers in short ex-

¹ Lingard, i. 172.

² Lingard, i. 174. The name *Danalage* was given to that large part of England under the Danish rule.—Freeman, i. 48.

peditions. Yet during this time of peace there was a continual dread of the sea-kings, whom no treaty could restrain. During the Danish war Wessex, like other parts of England, had been in danger of losing even her imperfect civilization. The Anglo-Saxon policy had established courts of justice of various degrees, from the king's superior court to the court of the village, but these had been closed during the war; injuries were inflicted with impunity, or cruelly revenged according to the strength of the injured person, and the Saxon Englishman, like the Dane, despised peace, justice, and religion. The destruction of churches and monasteries had increased the popular ignorance, for all books, nearly all writings, had been in Latin, and when the convent school was demolished, the use of letters was likely to perish altogether. On Alfred's accession he could not find a single priest south of the Thames, in the most civilized part of England, who understood the Latin prayers of the church.¹ The judges, generally ignorant and tyrannical, failed to inspire respect, but both high and low repaired to the court in which Alfred presided, and where he gave an impartial hearing to the complaints of even the humblest suitors. He strictly examined the judges when their decisions appeared unjust, insisted upon their acquiring the knowledge requisite for the duties of Wise Men, and inflicted death on forty-four magistrates, severity which is said to have produced a salutary reform.² Theft and murder thus became comparatively rare.

Besides all the princely duties which occupied his time, Alfred busied himself in making translations from such Latin authors as he thought the most useful. Contracts had been made verbally for want of notaries capable of drawing up charters, and it was rare, during several centuries, for a layman of any rank to know how to sign his name.³ In his preface to his translation from St. Gregory, Alfred expresses his desire that 'all the English youth, especially the children of the free-born, may learn to read English before they take to any employment, afterwards, such as please may be instructed in Latin.' Before the Danish invasion, churches had been well furnished with books, but the priests had small knowledge of the language in which they were written.⁴ The king translated Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History,' Boethius' 'Consolation of Philosophy,' and the 'Pastoral Letter of Pope Gregory,' pre-

¹ Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 353.

² Lingard, p. 178; and Paulli's 'Life of Alfred.'

³ Hallam, ii. 351-2. ⁴ Ib. 353, nota.

sending a copy of the last to every bishop in his dominions, to be preserved in the cathedral. Paper made from rags was not introduced before the close of the tenth century; thus the high price of parchment added to the scarcity of books. So many employments made Alfred anxious to regulate his time, but no clock, such as may now be found in the poor man's cottage, had been yet invented. After repeated experiments he discovered that a certain quantity of wax, made into six candles of equal size, would last exactly twenty-four hours. To guard the flame from the currents of air to which it would be exposed in a palace without glass windows, the candle was inclosed in a lantern of transparent horn, and as one inch of candle lasted twenty of our minutes, the king was able to measure his time with some accuracy.¹

Alfred, by his liberality, attracted to England many foreign artificers, and took great interest in the improvements introduced by them. Travelling was slow and perilous. Coaches had not been invented, and the carts and waggons were of such clumsy construction that they would be despised by any modern farmer. The only mode of travelling was therefore on horseback or on foot. The Roman roads had fallen into neglect, and there were no regular inns. Rivers without bridges, marshes or forests in which wolves lurked, interrupted the course of the traveller, who was frequently compelled to stretch his cloak on the damp earth, or to seek repose in a wretched hut.

When the dangers of a sea voyage were so great, we may wonder at the daring of the few navigators. Although it was known that a magnet attracts iron, its property of turning towards the north had not then been discovered, consequently the ships, which were small and ill-built, sailed without a compass. Alfred encouraged travellers to bring information concerning distant lands, and is said to have sent gifts to the Syrian Christians, who had settled on the coast of Hindostan, and to have received in return gems and spices.² 'Nothing less,' says Hallam, 'than the appearance of a hero so undespending, so enterprising, and so just' as Alfred could have rescued the Anglo-Saxon monarchy.³ Yet he never succeeded in completely subduing the Danes, and in the year 893 a large body of Northmen, headed by Hastings—the most renowned of the sea-kings—invaded Kent. The struggle which ensued was almost as fearful as the preceding, but again crowned with victory. The invaders were assisted

¹ Lingard, p. 180—Note, quoted from Asser.

² Palgrave's 'History of the Anglo-Saxons,' p. 187. ³ 'Middle Ages,' ii. 62.

by the Danes of Northumberland and East Anglia, and, in spite of all Alfred's skill and bravery, the contest continued for more than three years, when, after receiving a sum of money, Hastings promised to leave this country 'for ever.'

Before the end of the century, however, Hastings invaded France, and obtained a settlement on the river Seine.¹ To guard against a contest for his possessions after his death, Alfred assembled the Witan, and with their sanction divided his lands by will among the different members of his family.

He strictly forbade his heirs to molest those men whom he had made free, desiring that they should serve any lord whom they might choose.

It is believed that Alfred died in October, 901. Mercia was at that time in part possession of the Danes, the West-Saxon portion was ruled by an ealdorman, named Ethelred, who married Alfred's daughter Ethelfled. Under the title of 'the Lady of the Mercians,' she governed Mercia for seven years after her husband's death, and proved successful in wars with the Danes, from whom she took Derby and Leicester. It was not usual for women to rule, and as Ethelred and Ethelfled had no son, Mercia and Wessex were afterwards united under Edward.²

Alfred has been erroneously called the founder of Oxford University, and the originator of trial by jury. Oxford at that time belonged to Mercia. 'It is not surprising,' says Hallam, 'that the great services of Alfred to his people in peace and in war should have led posterity to ascribe to him every institution of which the beginning was obscure, till his fame has become almost as fabulous in legislation as that of Arthur in arms.' The English nation having been redeemed from servitude, and rescued from ignorance, and public order having been restored by his efforts, Alfred has justly been held in constant remembrance as 'the best and greatest of English kings.' Hallam's warm praise has been confirmed by the eloquent historian of the Norman Conquest, who calls Alfred the most perfect character in history.³ The Danes were nominally his vassals, but Alfred could exert no authority over

¹ The Danes, or Northmen, repeatedly invaded France, and even besieged Paris, before King Charles, called the Simple, yielded to them, in 911, that large province which was afterwards the Duchy of Normandy.

² Freeman's 'Old History of England,' p. 143. In her female rule, 'Ethelfled was quite an exception.' The situation of ealdorman appears not to have been hereditary, but was open to any man qualified to be a 'leader of men.'—Freeman's 'English Constitution,' p. 35.

³ Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 78; and Freeman's 'History,' i. 54. Mr. Freeman spells Alfred's name with the diphthong, and Edward, *Eadward* (before the Norman Conquest), following Kemble's example in other variations of nomenclature.

East Anglia, Northumberland, or the larger half of Mercia. One part of Mercia was united to Wessex, and Alfred appointed his son-in-law as its ealdorman.

From this time the West-Saxon kings were, in the eyes of all the Englishmen of the island, 'the champions of the national independence.'¹

On the death of Alfred the Witenagemot decided in favour of his eldest son Edward the Elder, who accordingly succeeded to the throne, although it was claimed by Ethelward, as the successor of Alfred's elder brother.

Edward's rule was vigorous and successful. Although inferior in literary labours, and, in a great degree, eclipsed by his father's glory, he distinguished himself by recovering Mercia, East Anglia, and Essex from the Danish yoke, and was welcomed in those provinces as a deliverer by the English population. It was probably a dread of his power, combined with desire of his protection against the Danes, which caused the princes of Wales, Northumberland, and Scotland all to submit to him by a voluntary act; 'they chose him to be their father and lord.'² The important cities of London and Oxford were in this reign added to Wessex, a proof that Alfred did not possess them. Wherever Edward penetrated he chose the strongest position for a fortress, and encamped at the spot to protect the workmen during its erection. In this way many of the principal towns of England were first founded. The Scots had before acknowledged the superior authority of a Northumbrian king, but never a king of the West-Saxons.

Edward the Elder was therefore the first prince who could claim to be 'king of the English and lord of the isle of Britain.'

His son Athelstan, who succeeded Edward, completed his father's work by first constituting Northumberland an integral portion of the kingdom. In his second year, all the vassal princes renewed their homage, but he was nevertheless obliged to meet his enemies in the field before he could secure the empire which his father had won. After he had intimidated the Welsh, their chieftains came to him at Hereford, promising to desist in future from incursions beyond the Wye, and to pay him yearly tribute. The Cornish Britons dwelling between the Land's End and the river Ex were compelled to retire beyond the river Tamar. To

¹ Freeman, p. 56.

² Chronicle, p. 924. See Freeman, i. 60. This first submission of Scotland, 'this commendation to the West-Saxon king,' proved of great future importance. Mr. Freeman gives reasons for preferring the term English rather than Saxon—'The name by which our forefathers called themselves was "English," or "Angli."—See note at the end of vol. i. 'Norman Conquest.'

confirm his ascendancy, he caused all the petty princes of the Scots, Welsh, and Britons to meet him at a place called Ead-mote, where they placed their hands within his and swore fealty to him, after the manner of the Anglo-Saxons. But the promises of dependent princes are only kept while their subjection is ensured by fear. In the year 937 a fleet of six hundred and fifteen pirate vessels appeared in the Humber, commanded by Anlaff, who brought Norwegians, Danes, Irish, Scots, and Britons, to re-conquer the settlement which had been so long held by the Northmen. The battle which took place at Brunan-burgh, in Northumbria, where Athelstan defeated this mighty host, was celebrated in Saxon and Scandinavian poetry. 'Never,' says a native poet, 'since the arrival of the Saxons and Angles, those artists of war, was such a carnage known in England.' After this splendid victory the Northmen called Athelstan 'the Conqueror.' Alfred and his son Edward were styled kings of the Anglo-Saxons. Athelstan was the first to call himself King of the English, or, sometimes, 'King of all Britain.'¹

His character was respected in foreign countries, and three young princes, Haco of Norway, Alan of Bretagne, and his own nephew from France, were educated under his protection.

Athelstan's popularity was probably increased by his reputation for charity. He annually redeemed at his private expense a certain number of persons who had forfeited their freedom by their crimes, and he ordered his bailiffs, under severe penalties, to let a poor man of English extraction be supported by the proceeds of every two of his farms.

He also was liberal in erecting churches, and vigilant in the administration of justice. Athelstan died in the year 941. Each province of England, no longer a separate kingdom, was under an ealdorman, or earl, who also had his Witan. Edmund, son of the late King Edward, reigned for five years, after Athelstan, from 941 to 946. Edmund's reign was much troubled by the incursions of the Danes. In 944 he drove out the invaders and regained possession of Northumberland. Edred, brother of Edmund, succeeded to the throne, according to the judgment of the Witan, because of the extreme youth of Edmund's children. He died in the year 955. Edwy, son of Edmund, a weak and unfortunate prince, succeeded his uncle, but reigned only three years.

On the death of Edwy, whom some call Eadwig, his brother Edgar, king of the Mercians, was chosen king by the whole people of the English. It is said that his father, King Edmund,

¹ Lingard, i. 202.

had placed him in childhood under the care of a powerful nobleman of East Anglia, and that his having lived among the Danes of that province promoted his accession, inasmuch as the Anglicised Danes respected a prince who seemed to belong in some degree to themselves.

Edgar wisely promoted the happiness of all his subjects, and did not impose English institutions where the population was chiefly Danish.¹

It is impossible to trace how far Edgar's wise rule was aided by the counsels of the able Dunstan, whom King Edmund made abbot of Glastonbury in 943, and on whom Edgar, while only king of Mercia, conferred the bishoprics of Worcester and London, and afterwards the archbishopric of Canterbury. Dunstan, the son of a powerful thane of Somersetshire, was educated in the abbey-school of Glastonbury, where, besides the usual learning, he acquired some arts useful in the service of the church—music, painting, and metal work. While abbot he exerted his power to correct the irregularities of the priesthood, and the strictness of his rule made him many enemies. Under Edwy, Dunstan was for a time an exile, but under Edgar he became the first English subject. On his appointment to the archbishopric he went to Rome to receive his 'pallium' from the Pope, a cape, the especial mark of the archiepiscopal dress.² Archbishop Dunstan died in the year 988, ten years after Ethelred's accession.

Edgar now re-divided the province of Northumberland, so continually disturbed by Danish incursions, leaving under control of the former earl, Bernicia, comprising the present counties of Northumberland and Durham, and appointing another earl to Deira, or the southern part, with York for its capital. Soon afterwards, when the Witan assembled at York, the king declared before them his 'will' that his Danish subjects should choose for themselves the best laws in their power, a permission which he willingly accorded as the reward of their fidelity. 'Among the English,' said Edgar, 'I and my Witan have fixed proportionate fines for different crimes, and my wish is that you do the same with discretion. But one thing I would have to be common to all people, English, Danes, and

¹ Although elected king, as is said by Florence of Worcester, 'by the whole people of England,' it is expressly stated that he reigned over West Saxons, Mercians, and Northumbrians. 'He was only sixteen years old when he was chosen king.'

² It appears extraordinary that so long and dangerous a journey as that from England to Rome should have been necessary. Alfsine, the immediate predecessor of Dunstan, 'died of the cold in crossing the Alps.'—Freeman's 'Old English History,' p. 176.

Britons, in every part of my empire, that both rich and poor possess in peace what they have rightfully acquired; and that no thief find a place wherein to secure stolen property.' He desired that copies should be made of these instructions, and be sent to the ealdormen, that they might be known to both rich and poor, adding that during life he would be a faithful and kind lord to all who would keep his peace.

Peaceful as were Edgar's intentions, it was necessary to prepare for wars every year when, as summer approached, there was an expectation of renewed incursions from the sea-kings. Edgar divided his fleet into three squadrons to protect the coasts, and made himself the circuit of his dominions. Instead of the tribute which former kings had exacted from the Welsh, it is said that he required them to make an annual present of the heads of three hundred wolves, and thus caused the extirpation of those animals. But wolves were still found in remote parts of England long after the Norman Conquest.

Through some unexplained circumstances, Edgar was not publicly crowned till fifteen years after his accession. The coronation took place at Bath in May, 973, and Edgar went afterwards on his usual cruise. At Chester he received homage from eight petty princes, whose titles testify the small divisions of territory still existing. Among them, the highest in rank, was Kenneth, king of Scotland, whose son Malcolm was prince of Cumberland;¹ and also 'Maccus of the Isles,' and five Welsh princes. These eight royal chiefs, it is said, rowed 'the King of all Britain' in a barge on the river Dee, Edgar himself steering, from the royal palace at Chester to the minster of St. John, and returning in the same way.

This was considered the proudest day that any English king had yet seen, and Edgar's ascendancy was viewed on the continent with respect.

This king's excellent care in the maintenance of justice and good order made the sixteen years of his reign renowned as the most prosperous period of Anglo-Saxon rule. His death, which took place in 975, was celebrated in a poem partly preserved in the Saxon Chronicle, in which he is called 'The Ruler of Angles, the West-Saxons' joy, and the Mercians' protector.' Fresh troubles ensued soon after his death. His two sons were too young to govern—Edward was but thirteen, Ethelred only six years of age. The right of Edward was

¹ In 945 Edmund, having conquered the Britons of Cumbria, bestowed that district on Malcolm, the king of Scots, on the condition of vassalage and of defending the coast from the sea kings.—Lingard, i. 280.

maintained by the Witan and by Archbishop Dunstan, and he was crowned without opposition; but three years afterwards he was murdered, by whom or for what reason is unknown. The people looked on him as a sort of saint, and called him Edward the Martyr. Edgar's younger son consequently succeeded to the throne when only ten years of age.

While Edgar's reign had been the most prosperous, that of his son Ethelred, surnamed 'The Unready,' was the most wretched period of the Anglo-Saxon rule.

The Northmen renewed their incursions, and Sweyn, or Svend, king of Denmark, repeatedly laid waste the southern counties, destroying several towns. Under these circumstances, the royal counsellors could think of no better defence than to purchase the forbearance of the leaders with large sums, and thus to encourage their return.

In the year 1002, Ethelred married Emma, daughter of the Duke of Normandy. The covenant ratified on that occasion is said to be the oldest treaty extant between an English king and a foreign power.¹ In compliance with Anglo-Saxon prejudice, the queen adopted the name of Elfgiva. But although in this case allowance was made for the 'insular feeling,' Normans were soon afterwards introduced to offices of trust in England, and the way thus prepared for the great conquest in 1066.²

The Danes had made incursions in the west of England, and Ethelred had paid them to retire, when, apprehending a plot to attack him and the Witan, he ordered a massacre of the Danes on the same day in every county.

Accordingly, on November 13, 1002, numbers of innocent victims were suddenly seized and put to death by the populace. In London those who fled to the churches for protection were pursued and slain round the altar. Among the victims was a sister of Sweyn, who had become a Christian, and who, in the agonies of death, threatened the perpetrators of this enormous cruelty with the speedy vengeance of her brother. The destruction could not have been intended to reach all the Danish settlers, for that would have been to extirpate about a third of the inhabitants. The threatened retaliation soon followed, and for years England suffered greatly from famine increased by the ravages of the Northmen. In the year 1004,

¹ Lingard, i. 239.

² See Freeman's 'Norman Conquest,' i. 332. The epithet 'Unready,' applied to Ethelred, who was both weak and cruel, signified, says Mr. Freeman, a 'man without rede or counsel.'—'Old English History,' 190.

Norwich having been spoiled and burned, the Witan of East Anglia agreed to purchase peace of the army.¹ Two years afterwards the king and the Witan, in behalf of the whole nation, decreed against paying tribute to the destroyers. But it was in vain that Ethelred commanded the whole people to rise in their defence. The Danes 'marched as they pleased,' says the Saxon Chronicle, and 'at last there was no chief who would assemble forces, but each fled as he best might; nor would one shire assist another.'

Canterbury was burned, Archbishop Elphege, venerable on account of his age and character, imploring the Danes in vain to spare the people. For some weeks his fate was suspended in the hope of a ransom of three thousand pounds, but the old man refused to ask help, which would have enriched the enemies of his country. In consequence he suffered death with fortitude. The most lawless anarchy now prevailed.

Sweyn sailed up the Humber with a powerful Danish fleet, and, victorious over the North of England, proceeded southwards, all the thanes of the West submitting and giving hostages, until it appears that by a decree of the Witan, made under the terror of his arms, he was looked upon by the whole people as 'full king.' Even London submitted to the conqueror, and in January, 1014, Ethelred withdrew to Normandy for safety, where his queen had already found shelter. When, however, after a few months, Sweyn died, the hearts of the men of southern England again turned towards their rightful monarch. Canute, son of Sweyn, a youth of nineteen, was named king by the crews of the Danish fleets, and was already in England; but the Witan having assembled in due form, declared that they would have again their lord by birth, provided he would rule them better than before. Ethelred sent over his son Edmund with other chiefs, to convey his assurances that if his subjects would be faithful to him he would amend his conduct and forgive all who had turned against him. After the solemn exchange of promises, Ethelred returned to England the Lent after his departure, and was received in London with joy. The compact then concluded is said to be the only recorded instance of an express stipulation made by an English king and the highest of his subjects.² For once Ethelred proved successful in war. He came down with a large force upon the

¹ This shows, as Mr. Freeman observes, that East Anglia was still so distinct as to have its own Assembly.

² Allen on the 'Royal Prerogative,' pp. 10, 14. Palgrave's 'Rise of the Commonwealth,' p. 657.

district of Lindesey, a part of Lincolnshire which still preserves that name, where Canute was collecting forces, and drove the Danes to their ships. For a moment England was freed from the foe. But Ethelred disgraced his victory by ravages as cruel as those of the Danes, even encouraging the assassination of his chief adversaries, so that renewed disaffection enfeebled his rule.

In the next year, 1015, Canute again invaded England, ravaging the southern counties until the whole of Wessex submitted to his power.

Weak and failing as was Ethelred, the worst of the Anglo-Saxon kings, he had in Edmund a heroic son, who came with a large army, still hoping to re-establish his cause. In April, 1016, Ethelred died, and two great assemblies of the Witan met to appoint his successor. That held at Southampton abjured the royal line of Cerdic, and swore allegiance to Canute. But another Witan was held in London which unanimously decided for Edmund.¹ He immediately endeavoured to re-establish the kingdom of Wessex, and in the course of six months fought six battles, attended by great slaughter and fluctuating success.

At Assandun, or Assington, 'all England,' says the Chronicler, 'fought; but Canute had the victory.' There was fearful loss of life among the English nobles.² Edmund would still have fought a seventh battle, but was persuaded to agree to a division of the kingdom by which the larger portion came into Canute's possession. The two kings met on an island in the Severn, and had agreed on the partition, when, on the 30th of November, the sudden death of the last of the West-Saxon kings reigning in uninterrupted succession caused all England to acquiesce in the dominion of the Danish king.

¹ Freeman, i. 418, 419.

² Ashdon, or Assington, in Essex, is supposed to have been the place where this battle was fought, and arms are said to have been found buried there.

CHAPTER IV.

REIGNS OF CANUTE THE DANE, AND HIS SONS HAROLD AND
HARDACANUTE—EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, 1042–1066—HAROLD,
SON OF GODWINE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the success with which Edmund Ironside so long sustained the English cause, after his defeat and death England had no choice left but that of submission to the stronger power. It was needful, however, that the Witan's authority should confirm the power of the sword. Before Edmund's accession a Witan held at Southampton had sworn allegiance to Canute, the son of Sweyn; and, as Edmund's sons were too young to succeed, Canute, who already ruled great part of England, obtained the entire mastery without opposition. The Witan immediately assembled in London to declare in his favour, and Canute solemnly promised to be a just and merciful king.¹ His wish for the greatly needed peace now tempered the cruelty to which he had shown his former bias. Preferring the kingdom of England to Denmark and Norway, he chose Wessex, the first seat of the House of Cerdic, for his especial care. To strengthen his authority, he invited from Normandy Emma, widow of Ethelred, to share the English throne a second time, and she consented to be again 'Lady of the English,' by marriage with a king much younger than herself, who had conquered her husband and driven her children into banishment. During the first two years of his reign the lives of several English were sacrificed, among whom was the Etheling Edwig, son of Ethelred by his first marriage. But about the year 1018, Canute determined on a wiser policy, and summoned an important Witenagemot to Oxford, to restore the laws of King Edgar, and enforce impartial justice on both Danes and English. It was not the actual written laws, but

¹ Mr. Freeman calls the Danish king 'Cnut,' or Knut; Lingard and other historians write his name Canute.

the prudent policy of Edgar of which the adoption was promised, and Canute after this time reformed his rule.¹

In 1019, when England enjoyed tranquillity, Canute visited Denmark, taking with him Godwine, a valiant and prudent Englishman, to whom he gave the title of earl, and the hand of a Danish lady of his own connection. Canute confirmed four earldoms, those of Mercia, Northumberland, Wessex, and East Anglia; at the same time drawing closer the ties which bound these provinces to the crown. Godwine, Earl of Wessex, was the king's viceroy throughout the reign, and remained the first subject in the realm. During the peaceful state of England at this time, few events are recorded. Offices before conferred on Danes were given to Englishmen, and Danish settlers acquired English feelings like their monarch. Thus Canute's throne, established by bloodshed, became 'emphatically the throne of righteousness and peace.'² The eighteen years of peace which followed the fierce struggle of thirty-six, formed a period of nearly unexampled happiness.

A considerable part of the Danish army had been dismissed to Scandinavia, but Canute kept in England a select body of troops, the Thingamen, or house carls, a royal guard of about six thousand men gathered from all parts of Northern Europe. The fame and power of Canute brought many volunteers to his banner, and they were the germ of a standing army unknown under earlier kings. The duties of these soldiers were laid down with great precision.³ In the second year of the reign the king of Scotland is said to have invaded Northumberland and obtained a victory; but in the year 1031, Malcolm, king of Scotland, submitted, and became 'the man of the Dane.'⁴ Canute atoned for previous excesses by liberally repairing the injured churches. By his order the minster of St. Edmund, the martyred king of the East Angles, was rebuilt at Bury, and he reverentially visited Glastonbury, where had been interred the remains of his rival Edmund Ironside, and which tradition pointed out as the burial-place of Arthur.

About the year 1031, Canute undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, visiting the most celebrated churches on his way, and obtaining both from the Pope and the Emperor relief for future travellers

¹ In both this case and subsequently, when the laws of Edward the Confessor were adduced, it ought not to be supposed, says Mr. Freeman, that the laws had been actually issued by Edgar or Edward, but that reference was made to their policy.—*'Norman Conquest,'* i. 463.

² Freeman, p. 479.

³ See Hallam's *'Middle Ages,'* i. 209, note; and Freeman, i. 491.

⁴ Freeman, p. 499.

from various imposts. On his return he wrote from Denmark a long letter to England, formally addressed to the two archbishops, but meant for the whole nation, in the tone of a father to his children. After relating the events of his journey and the privileges which he had secured for both English and Danes, he promised the redress of all known grievances; that in future no exactions should be allowed, declaring 'King Cnut needs no money raised by injustice.' The same spirit of equal justice appeared in the introduction of the laws enacted with the sanction of the Witan, the date of which is uncertain, but which were probably issued in the latter part of the reign.¹ The whole fabric of English society was by those laws carefully explained. The king could only legislate with the consent of the Witan. The bishop and the ealdorman, or earl, were joint presidents of the county court. The royal rights, differing somewhat in the West Saxon and Danish provinces, were to be neither extended nor diminished. No king was more active than Canute in frequently traversing all parts of England to see that the law was enforced. Trespasses in the king's forests were strictly forbidden, and the severe decrees passed against those who might pursue or destroy a stag, which was termed a royal beast, have greatly lessened Canute's merciful reputation.² Wolves and foxes alone were exempted from the royal protection, and might be destroyed, if not killed within the bounds of the forest.

The word forest was originally applied to any uncultivated tract of land left without an owner. The southern part of Northumbria, nearly corresponding to the present Yorkshire, is described as chiefly forest, and Canute is said to have been the first sovereign who framed especial laws to preserve such districts for his sport.

Canute died in his adopted kingdom, within the borders of Alfred's territory. He had established his sons as viceroys during his lifetime in the subordinate kingdoms of Scandinavia. Of these three sons only Harda-Canute, or Harthacnut, was the son of a crowned king and royal lady. Harda-Canute, then reigning in Denmark, was probably the intended ruler of England, and his claim was supported by the West Saxons, headed by Earl Godwine.³ But another candidate for the throne was Harold, son of Canute by an Englishwoman, who

¹ Freeman, i. 479-81.

² See Kemble's 'Saxons in England,' ii. 82; and Whitaker's 'History of Whalley,' p. 160.

³ Freeman, p. 534.

was supported by Earl Leofric, of Mercia, by the chief nobility north of the Thames, and by the people of London. English feeling was declared in favour of Harda-Canute, that of the Anglo-Danes lay with Harold. This difference has been explained as probably arising from the strong attachment of the West-Saxons to the departed king who had made their interests his own, and appointed Godwine, the greatest of living Englishmen, his principal minister. To patriotic Englishmen it had probably been a source of pride that Canute should wear his imperial crown in the West-Saxon capital, and send his sons or earls to govern Denmark and Norway. The Anglo-Danes, on the contrary, preferred the claim of Harold, and London, which now contained a large Danish colony, and was full of seafaring men, declared strongly in Harold's favour. In this state of parties soon after the death of Canute, the great national council met at Oxford.

Although Godwine eloquently advocated the cause of Harda-Canute, he could not obtain the undivided throne for the son of Emma. Leofric, Earl of Mercia, who on other occasions acted as mediator, proposed that these two half-brothers should share the rule, and in spite of Godwine's opposition, the assembly divided England between the two candidates. Once more, and for the last time on record, England had two acknowledged kings. Harold reigned to the north of the Thames, and Harda-Canute to the south.

Harold probably received the greater authority. According to one account, Archbishop Ethelnoth, the friend of Canute, still refused to consecrate Harold. He placed the crown and sceptre on the altar; Harold might take them if he dared, but while the son of Queen Emma lived, he would acknowledge none but Harda-Canute, and he forbade his bishops to perform the rite. If this tale be true, says Mr. Freeman, it was a proof of independence in the ecclesiastical power unparalleled in the history of the time. The kingdom was thus divided. Harda-Canute was in no haste to take possession of his allotted division, while Godwine, as earl, administered the West-Saxon kingdom, of which Emma was also the queen-regent.¹ But Harold's ascendancy was soon attacked by another competitor. Alfred, one of the two young princes, son of Ethelred and Emma, who had been living in Normandy, aspired to obtain his father's kingdom. Whether the elder Etheling, Edward, who was reserved for a better fate, at first concurred, appears uncertain, and the annals are contradictory; but there is no

¹ Freeman, i. 541, 542.

doubt that Alfred landed with a force, and was treacherously seized by Godwine, probably along with his companions, who were all slain or sold for slaves by the order of Harold. Alfred having been first blinded, was then murdered in the monastery of Ely. Common as were acts of ferocity at this period, the unhappy fate of this particular victim invested him with the halo of martyrdom, whilst popular indignation fixed the guilt upon Godwine. No worse crime had been perpetrated since the Danes first invaded England. One account ascribes the deed to Harold, another to Godwine.¹

The people of Wessex, who had agreed to obey Harda-Canute, were greatly disappointed by his prolonged absence, and at length resolved to depose him. 'Men,' says the chronicler, 'chose Harold over all to king and forsook Harthacnut, because he was too long in Denmark.' First the Witan of Wessex, afterwards the Witan of all England, called Harold to be king over the whole realm. Thus England once more and for ever became a united kingdom.²

Now at length Harda-Canute began to prepare for the invasion of the country which he had so long neglected. He sailed to Flanders, where Emma was residing after her expulsion by King Harold, and collected a considerable fleet. In March, 1040, however, Harold died at Oxford, and was buried at Westminster. He was not more than three-and-twenty years of age, and left no heirs.

In spite of the previous deposition, the Witan of England immediately decided in favour of the only surviving son of the great Canute, and sent an embassy to Bruges, to offer Harda-Canute the sceptre of England. He came with his mother Emma in June, and was crowned by the archbishop. But the joy shown on his arrival was soon succeeded by hatred. He conducted himself like a rapacious conqueror in a hostile land, and greatly incensed his subjects by extorting large sums for the payment of the Danish soldiers who manned the sixty ships which attended him to England. The Saxon Chronicle thus sums up its description of the popular feeling concerning this king. 'All were averse to him who before had desired him, and, moreover, he did nothing royal during his whole reign.'

Godwine was now tried before the Witan for the alleged

¹ Freeman, i. 546. Mr. Freeman discusses the points of Godwine's participation in this deed with the utmost care, and endeavours to show that, although Godwine might oppose the prince, and did not defend him from Harold, he was not guilty of the alleged barbarity.

² A.D. 1037.

murder of Alfred, and was solemnly acquitted. In return for the king's assistance in this verdict, the earl presented Harda-Canute with a magnificent ship, adorned with gold, and manned by eighty warriors in splendid attire.¹ The extortion of the Danegeld made the Danes again hated, and two of the house earls were killed at Worcester. To revenge this crime Harda-Canute sent the three great earls, Godwine, Leofric, and Siward, at the head of his personal force, and Worcester, after holding out four days, was plundered and burned.

Harda-Canute died suddenly at a wedding feast. The misgovernment of the sons of Canute prevented the formation of a lasting Danish dynasty. Even before the burial of Harda-Canute, the Witan decreed that Edward, son of Ethelred, should be king. The general feeling called for a prince of the old English race. There was another Etheling, a son of Edmund Ironside, but he had been all his life an exile. Edward, the brother of the unfortunate Alfred, had of late ventured to the court of his half-brother, Harda-Canute, but was then absent. An embassy of bishops and earls, headed by Leyfing, Bishop of Worcester, and the Earl Godwine, went to Normandy to offer Edward his natural inheritance. The people of England chose him as the only descendant of the old family within reach; without that choice his hereditary claim would not have been sufficient.² He was about forty years of age, and had become so attached to the manners and language of Normandy as to be scarcely an Englishman. To him, his mother Emma and his grandfather, the Duke Richard, were of more account than his father Ethelred, whom in his weakness he too closely resembled. The coronation, after being deferred for some months, was attended by an unusual number of the representatives of European courts. While the Danes under Canute had been acquiring the feelings of Englishmen, the Norman settlers in the great duchy on the opposite side had become Frenchmen, although under the distinct rule of their own duke. It was at the court of Normandy that the fugitive sons of Ethelred found an asylum, and it was by the help of the Duke of Normandy that during the French civil war King Henry was established on the throne of Paris.

Duke Robert, when about to depart for the Holy Land, presented to his nobles, as his heir, his son William, born about 1028, the son of a mother of low degree. The King of France had already promised to receive him as his 'man,' and the Normans promised to defend his succession. Duke Robert

¹ Freeman, p. 576.

² *Ib.*, ii. 12.

died during his pilgrimage, and the young William succeeded to his title when only seven years of age.¹ During part of his minority fearful misrule prevailed in the duchy; there was great danger of its division between rival lords. Although King Henry had not been uniformly friendly, the young duke appealed to him in his distress as his superior, and Henry, responding to the call of the prince on whom he had conferred knighthood, came with his troops in 1047, and won the victory which established William as ruler over Normandy.

Although Edward scarcely sought to disguise his preference for the customs and language of the Normans, he left England practically under the rule of the three great earls whose power he was compelled to recognise. Godwine, who presided over the West Saxons, had been foremost in bringing him to the throne; Leofric of Mercia was the great earl of central England, and Siward the Strong ruled the still fierce people of Northumbria, labouring hard to bring his troublesome province into order. At the coronation, Godwine brought the king a similar present to that which after his trial he bestowed on Ethelred, a magnificent ship conducted by two hundred rowers. When Edward was besought by his council to marry, he is said to have expressed preference for a single life, but he offered to make the daughter of Godwine, Eadgyth, or Edith, the partner of his throne, and their marriage took place in January 1045. Within a few years after Edward's accession, the whole of Wessex, Sussex, Kent, Essex, East Anglia, and part of Mercia, were governed by Godwine, his two elder sons, Sweyn and Harold, and his nephew.

During the first nine years of the reign no signs of open warfare appeared between the English and Norman parties. But in 1050, the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury made way for the instalment of the king's French favourite, Robert, bishop of London, and soon England discovered the results of foreign ascendancy within the realm. As Godwine had opposed Robert's nomination, so it became the archbishop's main object to effect Godwine's ruin. An accidental fray at Dover proved the marked difference between French and English modes of action. Eustace, Count of Boulogne, after visiting Edward, was returning home, when at Dover he and his friends expected to find free entertainment at the houses of the townsmen. The master of one house who resisted an intruder was wounded by him, and shot the Frenchman dead.

Count Eustace and his followers retaliated by slaying the

¹ *Freeman*, ii. 189. In the same year in which the empire of Canute was divided among his sons.

Englishman, and thus began a fight in which twenty of the English and nearly as many Frenchmen were slain. The count hurried back to Gloucester to complain of the Dover townsmen, upon which Edward ordered Godwine severely to chastise the town, of which he was the legal protector. Godwine refused, proposing that the Dover magistrates be summoned before the Witan, for that in England law was supreme, and justice could be denied to no man. Archbishop Robert seized the opportunity afforded by the king's irritation. He repeated the tale of Godwine's alleged treachery to Alfred; the Witan were summoned to Gloucester, to decide not on the conduct of Dover, but on the guilt of Godwine.¹ The three great earls came with their followers, and Godwine was emboldened to ask that Eustace, with his French associates, should be surrendered to justice. Strife was imminent, upon which the assembly was adjourned to London. Godwine's eldest son, Sweyn, had previously been outlawed for a crime, yet had been afterwards reinstated in his earldom; his enemies now not only obtained the renewal of his banishment, but extended the outlawry to the whole family. Five days only were allowed to Godwine and his sons to effect their departure from England. They carried their treasures to Bruges, and spent the ensuing winter at the hospitable court of Flanders. The king's displeasure extended even to the queen, and Edith was obliged to retire to a temporary abode with her husband's half-sister, the Abbess of Wherwell.

The chronicler vents his astonishment in remarks on the sudden downfall of this powerful earl. Alarmed at Gloucester by Godwine's hostile array, Edward summoned the Northumbrians to his aid, upon which Siward with his Danes were as ready as sixteen years before to take part in reducing and plundering the West Saxons.² The triumph of the Norman faction was complete; honours and offices were freely given to foreigners, as well as to such as had stood by the king. At this time, when Edward was surrounded by foreign favourites, the Duke of Normandy paid his first visit to England. He brought a great retinue, and, after staying some time with his royal cousin, was dismissed with gifts. Edward was childless; the hope of succeeding to his throne must have occurred to William, and was the probable motive of his marriage with Matilda, daughter of the Count of Flanders, an event which took place about 1053.

¹ Freeman, ii. 138.

² Freeman, ii. 144. Referring to the Witan held at Oxford after the death of Canute, where, in spite of Godwine, the power of northern England gave to Harold the larger share of the monarchy.

Remotely, and on the female side, Matilda was descended from Alfred the Great.¹

Godwin's exile prevented civil war; but Englishmen mourned the absence of the champion of their liberties, and deputations were sent to Flanders to urge his return.

He sent messages to Edward praying that he might be admitted to the royal presence and allowed to clear himself from hostile accusations. But to these petitions Edward replied by sending a fleet under Norman commanders to guard the coast of Kent from surprise.

Two of Godwine's sons, Harold, the best and bravest, and his younger brother, Leofwine, had passed the winter with the King of Dublin, and assembled a force, probably consisting chiefly of Danish adventurers whom they found in Ireland. With this band Harold landed at Porlock, on the western coast of Somersetshire, but encountered stout resistance. This county had been part of his brother Sweyn's earldom, and Sweyn's misdeeds had probably made his family less popular there than in most other parts of England. After gaining a victory, Harold plundered the coast, sailed round the Land's End, and proceeded to meet his father.²

Godwine's first attempt was foiled either by the unfriendliness or the fears of the people. He was joined at length at Portland by Harold with his nine ships laden with booty, and as they sailed along the shores of Sussex, Kent, and Essex, they were warmly welcomed by the Anglo-Saxon race. On the 14th of September, Godwine was again at Southwark, whence he and his sons had the year before been forced to flee for their lives. Thence he sent messages to the citizens of London, and with nearly one voice the citizens declared in his favour. The king little heeded the danger till Godwine was off Sandwich; he then hurried with all speed to London with his Norman earls and knights, and collected sufficient force to occupy the northern shore of the Thames. But on the southern bank of the river was a very different array of men eager to support Godwine's cause, and only awaiting his signal. Even the king's house carls shrank from the horrors of civil war. Godwine sent a message to the king praying that he and his family might be restored to their rights. Bishop Stigand

¹ Freeman, ii. 304.

² This ravage and slaughter at Porlock is deplored by Mr. Freeman as casting a shade over Harold's fame and over his father's triumphant return.—(Vol. ii. 319.) The Danes had made frequent incursions on the Irish coast, and Dublin had become one of their strongholds. Hence it was repeatedly the resort of Harold, Algar, and subsequently of the sons of Harold.

appeared on the earl's side as a mediator; hostages were exchanged, and it was agreed that the Witan should meet the next morning to adjudge between them.

The Norman favourites did not even dare to await that decision. Their only hope of safety was in immediate flight, and Robert of Jumièges, the Norman archbishop, Godwine's great foe, dared not take that foremost place in the great council to which he was officially entitled. As soon as the foreigners heard of peace they rode off at once to the coast. In the morning, when the 'Mickle Gemot' assembled, an enthusiastic multitude flocked together which no building could contain. In presence of this meeting, in the open air, once more stood Godwine, surrounded by his four sons, before the King of the English, and was allowed to clear himself from all charges.¹

Godwine was again earl of the West Saxons, and Harold earl of East-Anglia, while Archbishop Robert was deposed and outlawed. Edward renewed the semblance of friendship with the family of his queen, and walked unarmed by his father-in-law's side to his palace at Westminster, and allowed the Lady Editha to return to her place at court. Yet only six months after his restoration, the great Earl Godwine, at the royal table at the Easter banquet at Winchester, suddenly fell from his seat. He was carried by his sons to the king's own apartment: death soon ensued, and his body was interred with pomp in the minster among the tombs of kings. Many tears were shed for the great man who had ruled so long and so wisely, whose efforts had always tended to England's welfare.² As was most fitting, Harold, Godwin's eldest surviving son, left East Anglia to succeed his father in the West-Saxon earldom. He was then about thirty-two years of age, and the first man of England. After this time none but Englishmen were raised to the highest offices; still Harold's policy was conciliating, and he looked with less suspicion than his father on the presence of Normans of inferior position.

Many must have looked forward with anxiety to the next vacancy of the throne, as Edward was without direct heir. The king's thoughts were directed towards another Edward, called the Etheling, son of Edmund Ironside, who was living in far-distant Hungary. An invitation was sent by the joint authority of the king and the Witan to the Etheling to visit England. The bishop and abbot employed on this embassy tarried so long on their journey, that important events took

¹ Freeman, ii. 329-34.

² Ib. 353.

place before his arrival in the year 1057. He died in London very soon after landing, without having seen the king, and was buried at St. Paul's Cathedral, in the grave of his grandfather, King Ethelred.¹

The embassy had set off for Hungary before the death of Earl Siward, called 'the Strong,' Earl of Northumberland, leaving his son Waltheof, a child. Tostig, the next brother of Harold, who, notwithstanding his fierce character, had become a favourite with Edward, was appointed earl of that unruly province which had severely tried the powers of Siward. Evils which no one could foresee were occasioned by this unfortunate appointment. The Northumbrians were turbulent and lawless; Tostig was stern and cruel. The same assembly which installed Tostig banished Alfgar, earl of the East Angles, son of Earl Leofric, on a charge of treason, brought forward probably by Harold. Alfgar retaliated by collecting forces in Ireland, upon which he invited Gruffydd, king of Wales, to join him in predatory war against the English.

The Welsh king and his English ally spread devastation through the southern border, entered Hereford, slew the clergy who attempted to guard the cathedral, and gave the whole city to the flames. While these atrocities were being committed, the king was in winter quarters at Gloucester. The defence of the Welsh border had been the duty of Earl Ralph, the king's nephew, but this French earl had deserted his post. The strongest man was needed, and Edward appealed to Harold, although the inroad was not made in his province. Harold collected an army; Gruffydd and Alfgar retired before him. Hereford was regained and fortified, and peace was arranged.² Alfgar, whatever the justice or injustice of his previous deposition, had by his late conduct well earned a severe sentence, yet he was formally reinstated at the Christmas Gemot, and afterwards, on the death of his father, succeeded him as Earl of Mercia; remarkable testimony to the hereditary influence of the house of Leofric.³ When Alfgar inherited the earldom, East Anglia, with the addition of Oxfordshire, was entrusted to Gyrth, brother of Harold. Another brother, Leofwine, became Earl of Kent, or of South-eastern England. The house of Godwine had thus reached the utmost dignity which subjects could enjoy.

The whole kingdom, excepting the part of Mercia ruled by Alfgar, was in the hands of the four brothers.

The name of Harold appears in public documents of this

¹ Freeman, ii. 410.

² Ib. 395.

³ Ib. 396-416.

date, coupled with that of the king. He appears to have at times borne before foreigners the high title of Duke of the English. When he thus participated without competition in the royal power, he doubtless, from the death of Edward the Etheling, contemplated eventual succession to the throne.¹

In the year 1050, Edward had expressed his wish to imitate the great Canute by undertaking a pilgrimage to Rome, to which he had bound himself by a vow. He laid the matter before the Witan, but that assembly agreed that the king's absence would be injurious to the realm, advising him to send two bishops to obtain the papal dispensation from his vow. It is strange that so important a person as Harold could, about the year 1058, undertake this long and perilous journey. He went through France, where he stayed awhile, to obtain information concerning the government of that country. After some ecclesiastical negotiations, he returned in safety, and in May, 1060, attended the consecration of the church which he had erected at Waltham, connected also with a college for education. He endowed it with costly gifts, and the consecration was performed by the Archbishop of York, in the presence of the king and the Lady Editha. In the next year, 1061, Tostig and Gyrth ventured on a similar pilgrimage to Rome.

But the peace of the land was again threatened, and the assembly of 1062 at Gloucester was disturbed by renewed complaints of Gruffydd's ravages in Herefordshire. Harold must again set forth as England's foremost general, to put down the Welsh enemy 'for ever.' This first attempt failed: his troops could not endure a winter campaign in that wild country; but in May, his brother Tostig having come up with forces from Northumbria, he began a campaign attended by uniform success. The most inaccessible fastnesses proved no safeguard to the mountaineers. Harold won in every skirmish, and after every conflict he set up a stone pillar bearing the words 'Here Harold conquered.'² The Welsh were savage combatants, who spared no lives, and no mercy was shown them. They yielded at last, and sacrificed their king. The head of Gruffydd, of the last British chief who had struck terror into the English, was sent to Harold as a peace offering. In the next year Harold married Ealdgyth, the widow of the fallen king. The daughter of the freebooting Earl Alfgar became the wife of the English conqueror, yet Harold gained no real advantage from this calculating policy.

Far greater trouble ensued from the revolt of the Northum-

¹ Freeman, ii. 420-7.

² Lingard, i. 292; Freeman, ii. 474.

brians. The whole province rose against Tostig, who was accused of injustice and tyranny; even of abetting assassination. Tostig, who was honoured by Edward's friendship, was hunting with the king, when an assembly of the chiefs of Northumberland met at York. Although Tostig was hated, his frequent absences were resented by the province, the care of which had been entrusted to a deputy. Tostig had not been accustomed to consult a Gemot, and the Northumbrians were indignant that their ancient realm should be governed by orders from a West-Saxon town, or hunting seat. They deposed Earl Tostig, declared him an outlaw, and chose for their earl, Morcar, the younger son of Alfgar, of Mercia.

Alfgar died about 1062, and his son Edwin succeeded to the earldom of Mercia.¹ Harold's marriage to Ealdgyth did not save him from the secret cabals of her brothers. The thanes who assembled at York did not confine themselves to these legislative changes. Two hundred of Tostig's personal followers were massacred, the earl's treasury was seized, and Morcar, joined by the Danish settlers of Lincoln, Nottingham, and Derbyshire, was met at Northampton by Edwin with the men of Mercia and a large body of Welsh. The Northmen treated the country round Northampton as if it had belonged to an enemy. The king and Tostig were still in a retreat enjoying their favourite sport. Harold therefore was sent to Northampton, bearing the king's commands that the men of Northumberland should lay down their arms, cease from ravages, and if they had any charge against their earl, bring it before a lawful assembly. But the mighty host gathered together at Northampton felt their power, and refused Tostig for their earl upon any terms. The Northumbrian leaders declared that if the king wished to retain their allegiance, he must allow the banishment of Tostig, and confirm the election of Morcar. Only on these conditions would Northumberland submit to Edward. The king at length left his hunting to hold a Witenagemot at Bretford, near Salisbury. There Tostig, maddened by the accusations against his rule, charged Harold with instigating the rebellion, and Harold thought it necessary to deny the charge by a solemn oath. The king, so lately diverted from the labours of government by the pleasures of the chase, now burned to inflict the severest vengeance on the rebels. He was as eager to avenge the wrongs of Tostig as he had been, fourteen years before, to punish Dover on behalf of his foreign ally Eustace.² Edward's excitement was too much for his

¹ Mr. Freeman's conjecture, ii. 469, 486.

² Freeman, ii. 294.

strength; action was left to Harold, and Harold plainly saw that, unjustifiable as had been the conduct of the Northumbrians, civil war would be a worse evil than the humiliation, should the king yield to demands occasioned by his brother's misrule. If, as is probable, Harold hoped to succeed to the throne, he might well dread the enmity of the house of Leofric, which, holding both Northumberland and Mercia, more than equalled his own strength. He summoned a general Witenagemot to meet at Oxford. By its decrees Tostig was outlawed and Morcar appointed Earl of Northumberland. Some central shires were detached from the northern province, and given to the charge of Waltheof, the young son of Siward. As a sign of complete reconciliation, both parties, under Harold's guidance, agreed that the laws of Canute should be renewed. Tostig immediately left England, and passed the next winter at St. Omer under the protection of the Earl of Flanders.¹

It is difficult to give the exact date of an adventure which proved most disastrous to Harold. According to the best authorities, it was in the year 1064 that Harold, who was taking a cruise with a large number of friends, was driven by adverse weather on the shore of Ponthieu, the possession of Count Guy, a vassal of the Duke of Normandy. Guy did not scorn to enrich himself by despoiling unfortunate strangers. He threw Harold into prison, and sent a message to Rouen to acquaint Duke William with the rank of the prize which had fallen into his hands. William ordered Guy to release Harold immediately and bring him to Rouen as an honoured guest. Treated as a friend, and ready for an encounter of arms like all brave men of the time, he accompanied the duke on an expedition against Brittany. It has been reported that a marriage was spoken of between Harold and a daughter of William. It is uncertain whether at this time Harold had been plighted to the daughter of Alfgar. He accepted knighthood from the duke after the Norman fashion, and by so doing engaged to pay him fealty. But although treated with honour, he could find no way of escaping to England, until he had been induced to swear to William special allegiance. Looking forward to the English crown as the hope of the future, and knowing that the crafty duke coveted the same prize, Harold must have sworn with reluctance; and after he had pronounced the oath the duke is said to have shown him that the chest on which he

¹ 'It is a proof,' says Mr. Freeman, 'of rather more speedy communication than we are wont to suppose, that the whole Northumbrian revolution, including Tostig's departure, occupied less than one calendar month.'—Vol. ii. 501.

had laid his hand was filled with holy relics, involving higher and holier sanction of the pledge.¹ By this transaction, whatever the exact time and the extent of its conditions, William obtained a great advantage.

During his visit to England, Edward had inspired him with the hope of being his successor. It was after that visit that Edward invited the Etheling, who died so suddenly. Harold returned to England before the rebellion in Northumberland, to meet the difficult alternative of encouraging civil war and kindling the anger of two earldoms, or of enraging by conciliatory measures his brother Tostig.

Edward did not regain strength after the illness into which he was thrown by the great rebellion. Notwithstanding his partiality to Tostig, Harold was his trusted representative. The king's last interest was engrossed by the new abbey which he had caused to be built on Thorney Island, to succeed the church which Sebert erected about three centuries earlier. His zeal in this great undertaking is said to have cost him a tenth part of his revenue, and prepared the way for his subsequent canonization. Although Edward's life was purer than was common at that age, there is little reason to praise the sovereign whose weak partiality for foreign favourites rendered his reign 'a bridge' towards the great impending change. When the day came for the solemn dedication of the new abbey in the presence of the Witan, Edward was fast sinking to the grave. He publicly wore his crown at the Christmas festival, and himself arranged the gifts and relics in readiness for the great occasion. But by the 28th he was too weak to take part in the ceremony, in which the queen appeared in his place.² For the next week he lay in the presence of Editha, Harold, and Archbishop Stigand, mostly in stupor, but roused himself a few hours before death, to give his hand to Harold, and to declare that he committed the kingdom to his charge, to entrust the queen and some of his Norman favourites to his care, entreating him to allow them according to their own choice either to remain in England or to depart in safety.³

¹ Freeman, ii. pp. 43, 494; and vol. iii. p. 242-7. Mr. Freeman declares that the guilt of William in thus entrapping Harold to perjury was far greater than that of breaking a compulsory obligation; but the opinion of the time was contrary to this.

² A few pillars and a low-browed passage still remain of the original abbey thus founded by Edward, which was nearly of the same extent as the present abbey.—See Dean Stanley's 'Memorials,' pp. 25, 26.

³ Freeman, iii. 15. Mr. Freeman asserts that no historical fact is better attested than Edward's dying recommendation in favour of Harold.—(Appendix, 596). There

If Edward had ever thought of Duke William as his heir, that thought was not in his mind when, on the 5th of January, he addressed his last words to him who had been for thirteen years the guardian of the realm.

But it was not in Edward's power to bequeath the crown; it must be given by the vote of the Witan. That great assembly met without delay, and chose Harold to fill the vacant throne. It was a time of imminent peril, when for the first time since the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon dynasty, excepting Canute's accession, after conquest (and his countrymen already held possession of half England), the throne was to be occupied by an alien to the race of Cerdic. But Harold was the bravest and worthiest man in England, the only man who could hope to preserve union and repel the invader. While he accepted the honour, he must have felt all the peril of his position. The evening of Edward's death was spent in preparation for the two great ceremonies of the ensuing day. Harold's coronation was to follow his election; the day after Edward's death was fixed for his interment. Dressed, as usual on these occasions, in his royal robes, wearing the crown and the pilgrim's ring, the king, afterwards venerated as the last of his race, was borne to the abbey for burial; a train of clergy followed, and while the funeral psalms were sung, men's hearts were troubled.¹

It is strange to think of Harold's coronation and Edward's funeral on the same day. The king-elect was led to the high altar of the new minster; he bowed down while a solemn hymn was sung containing prayer for his endowment with strength and righteousness. When the officiating primate asked the people if they would have the Earl Harold for their king, a shout of assent rang through the building. Then Harold took the solemn oath that he would endeavour to preserve peace, would forbid wrong, would enforce justice and mercy. He was anointed with oil, the sword of justice was placed in his hand, the crown of England on his brow, mass was performed, and a banquet concluded the last solemn ceremonials of Christmas.

The first danger which Harold apprehended was the disaffection of Northumberland, and he soon set off for the North,

has been much discussion concerning the place of Harold's coronation; the old Minster of St. Paul, or the new Westminster. Dean Stanley has given his reasons for supposing that it was at St. Paul's, but Mr. Freeman emphatically decides for Westminster.—Note, vol. iii.

¹ It was not till the year 1161 that Edward was canonised by Pope Alexander II., after which his name was distinguished by the surname of 'the Confessor;' but in the ensuing calamities of England, men's hearts turned towards him already as a good monarch under whose rule was peace.—Freeman, iii. 34.

accompanied by Bishop Wulfstan, whose intervention was in the first instance successful. He was received as king by the Northumbrians, but in the Earls Edwin and Morcar he had treacherous allies. England, indeed, was loyal to Harold, but there was the greatest danger from Normandy. The Duke William was quickly informed that Edward's death had been followed by Harold's accession, and he burned with resentment against the man whom he had entrapped into feudal obligation. He ordered Harold to resign the crown immediately, or to hold that crown as his vassal, and to perform all other promises to which he was bound in consequence of his oath in Normandy.¹ Harold's answer was a complete refusal. He was king of the English and would perform the duty to which he had sworn. He could not be bound by an illegally extorted oath.

The duke determined to attempt the conquest of England. His select council encouraged this daring scheme; but in a larger assembly of thanes, some disapproved of so perilous an enterprise. He soon, however, overcame resistance. He promised his followers the wealth of England; he told the tale of his rights over Harold, and asked each of his hearers how many men or how many ships he could furnish for the great undertaking.

And in Tostig, the exiled earl, William found an immediate ally. Regardless of everything but the present, Tostig saw in his brother a triumphant enemy, and was ready for service of any kind against the new king. It was doubtless with William's approval that Tostig, in May, 1066, attempted to attack the southern shore of England; but Harold's fleet was on the watch, and Tostig repaired to Norway, where he found a brave ally in King Harold Hardrada. Meantime, William proclaimed his charges against the English, and particularly against the House of Godwine, including everything by which he could inflame men's minds and excite them to join in his great expedition. Even the melancholy fate of the Etheling Alfred, once attributed to Godwine, was now recalled to mind.² Eustace, Count of Boulogne, was reminded how the men of Dover had resisted his followers, and how Earl Godwine had refused to punish

¹ Freeman, iii. 260. It is not known, says Mr. Freeman, whether Harold received this message before he set forth on his expedition to Northumberland. One of William's conditions is said to have been the marriage of Harold to one of his daughters.

² Twenty-six years had elapsed since Godwine was cleared from suspicion by the oaths of his peers, but the charge was again urged against him by the Norman favourites in 1052, to induce Edward to deprive him of power.—Lingard, i. 274; Freeman, iii. 282.

them, and Eustace seized the opportunity to retaliate on Godwine's son. Robert, who had fled from Canterbury in 1052, when the Godwines returned to England, was now set up as an injured prelate, and most injurious to Harold was the charge that he despised the obligations contracted in presence of the holy relics at Rouen. The Pope gave his solemn approval to the duke's enterprise, and sent him a sacred banner with a ring containing a relic, exhorting him to punish Harold's perjury and to bring England more completely under the influence of Rome. So great was the enthusiasm thus excited, that warriors hastened from all parts of France eager to fight against one who was stigmatised as a usurper and a traitor. No sooner was the expedition determined upon, than a felling of the woods of Normandy commenced to prepare a larger fleet than had ever left the shores of France.

Harold was not tardy in his measures of defence. He collected greater forces for service by sea and land than had ever before been gathered together by any English king; and for four months, from May till September, he stayed with his troops carefully guarding the coast. But to keep such a large army together without fighting or ravaging the country was very difficult. When September came he was compelled to disband, and returned to London as a central station. But it was the month of imminent peril. Hardrada, with half the warriors of Norway, was already on the ocean, hoping to conquer England; and William's large fleet lay now ready at the mouth of the Dive.¹ Now, for the last time, the North of England was wasted by a Northern horde. At the mouth of the Tyne, Hardrada was joined by Tostig, and threatened York. Edwin and Morcar met them with troops which, in spite of bravery, were put to flight. Only Harold could save the northern province, and yet by marching he would uncover the South. Under the pressing call, Harold marched with his army.

With the whole strength at his command Harold set forth to save England from the invaders, and 'rested not day or night,' say the chroniclers, 'till he had delivered York.' At Stamford Bridge, where he encountered the King of Norway and his own unworthy brother, he gained a complete victory, but with considerable loss. Of the Northmen both Hardrada and Tostig were slain, besides the great mass of the invaders. The small remnant were allowed to sail away in safety.

¹ Freeman, iii. 339-90.

Anxious as Harold must have been about the south coast, he allowed a few days for the celebration of his victory and for refreshment. He knew not that William had landed at Pevensey three days after that victory. A messenger from Sussex interrupted the banquet at York with the fatal news. A thane of Sussex is said to have beheld the landing of the Norman army. He saw the archers and the knights come on shore, the shields and armour brought from the ships, a fosse dug and palisades fixed round their encampment. Seizing his arms and his horse, he rode with all possible speed until he reached the king in the banqueting hall at York. Another messenger quickly followed from Hastings, who told of the Norman ravages in the country, and entreated Harold to march without delay. Harold is said to have exclaimed that, had he been on the south coast, the Normans should not have landed. The fate of England had indeed depended on one man, and Harold could not in person defend both coasts at the same time. He summoned a military council, and marched at the head of all his available force. He waited at London for troops from the North, but Edwin and Morcar failed him. Men flocked in from Wessex and from the provinces held by the faithful earls. Harold was seated on his throne in the Westminster Palace, when a messenger arrived with another and last message from the duke, who once more reminded him of his obligations, and asked him either to submit the case to umpires or quietly to yield the crown.¹ Harold could scarcely restrain his anger, and challenged William to meet him in battle on the following Saturday. It is said that Harold's good brother Gyrth, aware of the danger of the broken oath, offered to take his place at the head of the army, and that he counselled Harold to devastate the land, that the Normans might not obtain provisions. But Harold determined to lead his troops in person, and refused to add to his countrymen's misery by laying waste their corn fields. He hastened through Kent and Sussex till on Friday, October 13, he pitched his camp at Senlac, afterwards named 'Battle.' He fortified the hill with a palisade, there fixed his royal standard, and awaited the battle of the morning. According to Norman writers, the English passed the night in sustaining their courage by drink and songs, the Normans in solemn preparation for a war to which two bishops, one of whom was Odo, William's half-brother, imparted the character of a religious crusade. In the great battle which

¹ Freeman, iii. 431.

followed, two opposite systems of warfare were contending under two commanders well matched in skill and courage. The Normans relied on their archery, the English on their lances and their heavy axes. The Norman leaders fought on horseback; Harold, like his predecessors, on foot. The choicest warriors of England stood on the hill round the standard; in the inner circle stood Harold himself, bearing on his shoulder the two-handed axe. He had charged his men to stand firm in defence, and to leave the attack to the Normans, declaring that so long as the English kept their ranks the Normans could never overcome them. The Normans, after hearing mass, went forth in battle array to storm the English position. In the midst of their ranks was carried the Pope's consecrated banner; close to it rode the two great leaders, William and Odo, the warrior Bishop of Bayeux. The infantry and light-armed troops were sent the first, to disorder the ranks of the English and prepare for the charge of the horse. First of all, by the duke's permission, rode a minstrel named Taillefer, singing songs of the prowess of France, and striking blows till he fell beneath the enemy whom he defied. The infantry could make little way against the fierce resistance of the English with their heavy axes, and it was in vain that during the first part of the day the best chivalry of Europe pressed forward to the attack. Harold's shield-wall long remained unbroken. The Bretons fled, pursued by a body of English; William's left wing was thrown into confusion, and it was reported that the duke had fallen. Tearing off his helmet, William recalled his soldiers, rode with his brother after the fugitives, restored order, and prepared for victory. Pressing on towards Harold's barricades, William's horse was killed by a thrust from Gyrth, but Gyrth himself fell by the hand of William; Leofwine fell also, but still the men of both the earls fought on. Through nine hours the best part of the English army appear to have kept their post 'of constant defence, never yielding till subdued by death or utter weariness.'¹ So long as Harold lived, the hope of victory still remained. But as twilight came on a great shower of arrows fell among the defenders of the standard. Harold's axe dropped from his hand; he was pierced in the eye. Four knights rushed in and speedily slew him. Scarcely a man of Harold's following returned from that fatal hill; the nobility of southern and

¹ Freeman. It is impossible satisfactorily to abridge the account of the battle given by Mr. Freeman, who inspected the site and has shown the greatest care in describing every detail.

eastern England perished. The light armed fled under cover of the darkness; but even in the course of their flight the English turned fiercely on their pursuers. William returned at night to the place of slaughter, gave thanks to God for his victory, and acknowledged the services of his faithful followers, who loudly applauded him. He took refreshment on the field, and ordered the burial of the dead. The Normans all night kept watch upon the hill. Women came from the country around seeking the bodies of their husbands or sons, which William expressly desired that they should receive for burial. The story runs that Gytha, the Danish mother of Harold, came to offer William an enormous sum in return for the body of her son, that it might be interred in the minster in which he was crowned, and that William refused her. It was long before Harold's mangled corpse could be recognised among the heap of slain; but when at length identified by one who loved him well, it was wrapped in a purple robe and buried by William's command beneath a pile of stones upon the rocks of the Sussex shore.

After a time, however, the intercession, probably of the brotherhood which Harold had instituted, obtained permission from the Conqueror to remove the remains of their founder to a tomb before their high altar at Waltham Abbey.¹ The imperfect record of the events by which the Norman duke acquired the throne of England is confirmed by very curious and valuable testimony, that of ancient tapestry probably wrought for the cathedral of Bayeux by the order of Bishop Odo. There may still be seen depicted the humiliation of Harold when he bound himself by the fatal oath at Rouen. There are represented the landing of the Norman army at Pevensey, and the destruction of Harold and his army; 'the house carls lying dead, while the light armed are taking to flight, some of them on the horses of the fallen.'

This tapestry, neglected for many centuries, is now carefully preserved under glass in the public library at Bayeux.²

William solemnly vowed to erect a splendid abbey on the place where he had won this great victory. Some time afterwards the vow was performed, and the high altar was placed on

¹ Mr. Freeman decides on this as the most credible of many accounts.

² Mr. Freeman has there inspected it three times, and pronounces it to be one of his highest authorities. The earliest notice of the work was published in 1724, and it was supposed to have been wrought by Matilda, the wife of the Conqueror, but Mr. Freeman believes that the work was traced by an eye-witness of the battle of Senlac. — See Appendix to vol. iii., 'History of the Conquest.'

the spot on which Harold erected his standard. The building which covered the hill was called by the French 'l'Abbaye de la Bataille,' and was dedicated to St. Martin. The monks who came thither from France were well endowed with the property of the English who had fallen, and the Abbot of Battle was invested with peculiar privileges.

CHAPTER V.

REIGN OF WILLIAM I.

1066-1087.

WILLIAM apparently expected to receive the immediate submission of England. But when the news of Harold's death and of the destruction of the army reached London, there was at first no thought of submission. The question was how rightfully to fill the vacant throne. Having lost their hero king, it was needful to choose another, but it was mere infatuation at so great a crisis to elect the feeble young Etheling Edgar, because he was the last of the royal house. The royal boy could add no strength to the country's cause, and the English made no combined effort to rally round him. Meantime, on the sixth day after his victory, William began his march upon London. Some Normans had been killed at Romney, and there William 'took vengeance for the slaughter of his men.'¹ His object was to prove that the only safety of the country lay in submission. Dover Castle surrendered, and to Dover he showed forbearance, compensating the townsmen for houses destroyed by some of his unruly soldiers.

As he approached Canterbury, messengers brought him the expected submission of the city, and men came from all parts of Kent with gifts. He sent messengers to Winchester, and the capital of Wessex paid a tribute. London alone held out. William sent before him a body of five hundred knights to gain entrance, but the citizens sallied forth against them; a skirmish followed, the English being beaten, and Southwark was burned.² Avoiding a direct attack on the city, William kept the right bank of the Thames, and reached Berkhamstead, in Hertford-

¹ The words of the 'Saxon Chronicle.'

² Freeman, iii. 542. Mr. Freeman decides against the report that Kent was better treated than the rest of England. William promised everywhere to preserve the ancient laws of the realm.—P. 539, note.

shire, without opposition. He sent messengers, it is said, to London, offering peace in return for submission. The citizens had at length become aware of the impossibility of resistance; they agreed to give up the young Etheling, and to pray the Conqueror to be their king. They sent an embassy, including the Archbishop of York and many of the chief men, besides the young Edgar, to whom William was specially gracious.¹ He had little reason to fear such a rival. The English chiefs submitted 'for need,' and hoped that when consecrated their sovereign, William, would prove, like Canute, a just governor. William, for form's sake, we must believe, consulted his council before he assented, but the preliminaries were soon arranged; and as Stigand, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who succeeded Robert, had not been declared legally invested, Aldred of York, who had crowned Harold on the preceding 6th of January, was appointed to consecrate William at Westminster on the Christmas day ensuing. Careful to guard against a popular outbreak, William sent on a detachment to erect a temporary fortress, which was afterwards succeeded by the massive Tower of London.

Westminster Abbey was guarded by Norman soldiers, but filled with a mixed crowd of men of both nations, when the archbishop presented William to the people, and asked in English, as of old, if they would acknowledge him as their king. But as the English language was unknown to both William and his followers, the Bishop of Coutances next addressed the Normans in French, asking whether they also were willing that their duke should become King of England. They raised shouts of assent, but unhappily the troops outside the building either mistook the meaning of these cheers, or purposely misinterpreted them, and, as Normans frequently acted when willing to create a disturbance, they fired the adjoining buildings. Men of all ranks hastened to quench the flames, so that the king, the officiating clergy, and the monks of the abbey, were alone present at the completion of the ceremony, and William and the archbishop are said both to have trembled at the moment when a new crown, specially made for the occasion, was placed on the Conqueror's head, who took an oath, seemingly devised for this special case, that if his people would be loyal, he would govern them as well as the best of their kings.²

Thus William ascended the throne according to the due

¹ Freeman, iii. 548.

² Freeman, iii. 560. The unfortunate outrage committed by the Norman soldiers increased the hostility of the English towards the strangers.

forms of law. It was not alone as the victor in battle that he wore the crown of England; he had been entreated by the heads of the nation, who came to him at Berkhamstead, to be their king. He gave a charter to the city of London, which confirmed all the rights, possessions, and customs which the citizens had hitherto enjoyed. This charter, which was written in English and signed by William with a cross, may still be seen in the city archives, and shows that a stranger named Godfrey was the chief magistrate, or portreeve.

Meantime, to secure London from revolt, that 'White Tower' was in course of erection which still forms a part of the building known as the Tower of London.¹

Very soon after the coronation William withdrew to Barking, in Essex, where he received the allegiance of Edwin and Morcar and of many earls and prelates, who submitted implicitly to his power. The slaughter at Senlac had left comparatively few men of note in Wessex and East Anglia. William had promised that his Norman followers should share the wealth of England, and at the first beginning of his reign he began the confiscation of English lands, by which great part of the country was transferred to Norman possessors. In justification of this he declared that he was alone the lawful successor of his kinsman, King Edward, and that Harold was an usurper. The lands of all who had fought against him, or refused obedience, were, as he asserted, legally forfeited. Three commissioners were appointed to superintend the changes by which in some districts the inheritance of nearly all the gentry and yeomanry fell into the hands of insatiable foreigners. When William first made a royal progress, he met with no opposition, but encountered only humble suppliants begging sometimes for a small piece of their old possessions; and he granted numerous such petitions, we are told, from pity.² By these confiscations, William not only satisfied his Norman followers, but changed them into peaceful settlers on the soil. Besides the seizures of land, William laid a very heavy tax on all able to bear it. Rich men, cities, and monasteries were induced to make liberal gifts, and golden crosses, precious vestments, and chalices of gold, were soon sent to the churches of Normandy.³ William appears to have eagerly longed to re-visit his duchy, but he first took needful pains to

¹ Palgrave, iii. 387; Freeman, iv. 29.

² Freeman, iv. 31.

³ The English women were renowned for their skill in gold work and embroidery. They had worked in gold the figure of the Fighting Man on Harold's banner, and it is believed that Odo caused them to produce the descriptive Bayeux tapestry. William sent Harold's standard to the Pope.—Ibid. 61.

secure the obedience of the English. A castle was already begun at Norwich to curb the citizens if they should dare to rebel, and similar fortresses were erected in southern England. The supreme rule over the conquered land was given to Bishop Odo and William Fitz-Osbern. Three Northern earls, Edwin, Morcar, and Waltheof, were summoned to accompany William to Normandy. They might have been troublesome, it was thought, had they been left in England. Edgar, the Etheling, also, and Stigand, the primate, received orders to accompany the king, and in March, 1067, William embarked with his selected companions, and made his triumphal entrance into Rouen, where Matilda had been the regent during his absence. The Easter feast was held this year in Normandy, not in England. In Normandy all was loyalty and exultation, but in England the stern rule of the two viceroys had excited the indignation of the people till they were seeking foreign help from any quarter. Everywhere Englishmen were bent on escaping from the yoke which they found so galling, and many left their country to find a home in foreign lands.

When William returned in December, although no part of England was in open revolt, the state of the West and North was threatening, and there was fear of an invasion from Denmark. He immediately ordered so large a confiscation that it was said that he gave away the land of every man.¹ The great Christmas feast was, however, held at Westminster for the third time, and William wore his crown, and collected the Witan of England. And from these 'wise men, French and English,' the king required a decision on the guilt of no less a person than Count Eustace of Boulogne, who had some time before made a league with Kentish malcontents to seize Dover Castle at the time of Odo's absence. The attempt failed immediately on his return, with the usual loss of life, while the count escaped from peril by sea. The Witan decided against Eustace, but he was safe at home, and afterwards regained the king's favour.² William's authority had not at this time extended to the western counties, and Exeter, an opulent city, was proud of its independence. Its citizens sent messengers to rouse the men of the neighbouring shires to join in a league against their foreign king. Gytha, the widow of Godwine, was in Exeter, and so were the elder sons of Harold, youths approaching manhood.³

¹ Freeman, iv. 127.

² *Ib.* iv. 112-120.

³ These could not be named Princes or Ethelings, being of low parentage on the mother's side.—Freeman, p. 143.

In the counties nearer London the lands of Harold and his brothers had been forfeited; but while the West remained free, revenues were still ready for the cause of common freedom, and volunteers flocked from all quarters into Exeter. William undertook at once to subdue this formidable movement. He first required the citizens to take an oath of allegiance to him as their sovereign, and to promise to admit his entrance into their city. The chiefs of the city showed a degree of spirit which they had not the power to maintain; they offered to pay William the same tribute which they had been used to pay to former kings, but they would not swear allegiance or admit him within their walls. William replied that it was not his custom to allow conditions to be offered by subjects, and immediately marched into Devonshire with an army. On his way he ravaged the country. When he was within four miles of Exeter, he received another deputation from men who were alarmed by his power, and modestly entreated pardon and peace. They left hostages, but when William approached the city gates the war party had regained the ascendancy, and the walls were defended against him. He was enraged, and ordered one of the hostages to be led close to the east gate and deprived of sight in presence of both armies. The citizens still maintaining their defence, William ordered the walls to be undermined, and when the siege had lasted eighteen days, a breach was made which rendered further resistance impossible. Gytha and her family escaped to an islet in the Bristol Channel, her grandsons to Ireland, while William became master of Exeter, pardoning the citizens, we are told, and making efforts to preserve their goods from the rapine of his soldiers. He immediately took measures for the erection of a castle, and marched towards Cornwall, everywhere punishing resistance by destruction and confiscation. He had thus completed the conquest of Western England.¹

According to the custom of English kings, he kept the Easter feast at Winchester, and sent for Matilda from Normandy to share his royal honours. He again wore his crown at Westminster at Whitsuntide, and there the Lady Matilda was 'hallowed to queen' by Archbishop Aldred.²

As yet William had not visited the North; the imprudence of the northern province, however, soon brought him there as a stern avenger. Civil war had been carried on in Wales, and at

¹ See Freeman, iv. 160-162; and Palgrave, iii. 345.

² Freeman, iv. 179. Matilda died in Normandy in 1083, and was buried at Caen, where her eldest daughter was in after years a renowned abbess.

a great assembly of both Welsh and English a strong attempt was made to rally the people against Norman oppression. At the head of the northern movement was Gospatric, to whom William had, probably for a large sum of money, given the earldom of Bernicia, or northern Northumberland. The king was now informed that the North had determined to withstand his power. He proceeded northward, subduing Mercia by the way.. Castles were begun at Warwick and Nottingham, and when he approached York he received an embassy, bringing the keys of the city and hostages for its fidelity. William took measures to keep the disaffected city from rebellion by the erection of a castle. York was at present the most northern point at which he had made his power felt, and he ventured no farther, but returned southward, securing several important places by castles and garrisons. Edwin and Morcar had at once submitted on William's advance, and Gospatric, with Edgar Etheling and his sisters, found a refuge for the winter at the court of Malcolm of Scotland, to whom Edgar's sister, Margaret, was afterwards united.

The North had not risen in arms till the West had been overcome; consequently it was now soon subdued, although some of its bravest inhabitants still maintained their independence in Durham.¹ The state of the country was everywhere wretched and insecure, no minor authorities being sufficiently strong to secure needful protection to the people. It appears that William decided at the Christmas assembly of 1069 to bring Northumberland into more complete subjection, and entrusted the task to Robert de Comines, one of his foreign followers. But when this new earl entered Durham he encountered an infuriated people, and was killed. A general massacre also took place of the Normans in Durham, upon which York now took courage and resolved on a vigorous effort to regain its independence. The Etheling Edgar ventured to join the citizens, and the spirit of the people rose high in hope. The governor of the newly-built castle sent word to William that York would soon be lost unless the garrison were immediately reinforced. William did not delay; he came with all speed at the head of overwhelming forces, and the city paid dearly for its presumption; but not yet had the day of full vengeance come. Ever since William's accession northern England had been craving help from Denmark, and King Svend was willing to send aid to a land where such large numbers of Danes

¹ See Freeman, iv. 193-4.

were among the inhabitants. In September, 1069, the Danish fleet entered the Humber, and all Northumberland was eager to welcome the expected deliverer. Among other chiefs came Waltheof, Earl of Northampton, one of those whom William had obliged to accompany him in the visit to Normandy.¹ York again became the centre of the movement, and before the Danes reached the city a patriotic host poured forth to join them. Fearing a siege, the Normans set fire to the city, and a fight ensued which caused the destruction of three thousand of the king's followers. The two castles by which the king had hoped to preserve order were ruined; and thus between the wilful fires of the Normans and the vengeance of the Englishmen, York was left a mass of ruins. The Danes carried their booty to their ships and remained the next winter in the Humber, but their leader appears to have received a bribe from William, who allowed him to plunder the English coast on condition of his departure in the spring.² Betrayed by its allies, as previously by its earls, Northumberland was thus exposed to the full vengeance which it had provoked, and for the third time William entered York and found no men to withstand him in the ruined city. And now he proved a merciless conqueror. He went through the whole province, even penetrating its wildest and least accessible regions, determined to leave the people no power to engage in arms again. The havoc which fell on the land was dreadful. Stores of corn and property of all kinds perished; even living animals were driven into the consuming flames. The great survey made in England seventeen years afterwards shows by the word 'waste,' repeatedly applied to the Yorkshire lordships, that even then they had not recovered from the spoliation.³

During the nine years which followed 'no attempt was made at tilling the ground; between York and Durham every town stood uninhabited, their streets became lurking places for robbers and wild beasts.' So terrible was the scarcity of food that numbers died of hunger, sinking down in the open fields where there was no man to bury them. Some sold themselves for slaves, or pawned their freedom for temporary subsistence.⁴ Thus William became 'lord of Northumberland, but he was lord only of a wilderness.' The Conqueror, who had, three

¹ Freeman, iv. 255.

² *Ib.* iv. 319.

³ It may be doubted, says Mr. Freeman, whether northern England ever fully recovered from this tremendous blow till modern times.—*Ib.* 292.

⁴ See Freeman, iv. 294; and note, 'Sometimes when happier days had come, to be set free by the charity of their masters.'

years before, taken his supper on the battle-field at Senlac, in 1069 kept his Christmas feast in ruined York, wearing his crown and decked with other badges of royalty from Winchester. But the conquest of Chester still remained, and its resistance brought upon that city also, and all the adjacent country, similar vengeance. Numbers of homeless wretches flocked into Evesham, where the good abbot, as far as possible, fed the hungry and buried the dead. But if the superiors of every monastery in England had been equally charitable, it would have availed but little to relieve the universal distress.

It is said that a hundred thousand English died of cold and hunger in that awful winter, during which William's conquest was completed.¹

In the following year we are told that William caused all the monasteries to be searched, and enriched himself by their treasures. In pursuance of a wise policy, he encouraged the blending of races by the intermarriage of Norman and English. In August, 1070, the celebrated Lanfranc, the most learned ecclesiastic of the time, whose lectures in Normandy had attracted crowds of students, was made Archbishop of Canterbury. Lanfranc had soon a disagreement with the stern Bishop of Bayeux, whom on his accession William had made Earl of Kent. To adjust their difference William ordered a great assembly to meet on Penenden Heath, near Maidstone, that the matter might be heard, according to the ancient English form, before the principal men of Kent. The pleadings on both sides occupied three days. The Bishop of Coutances was the justiciary, and a number of men of rank and authority, French and English, appeared at the same time as judges and witnesses. The South Saxon Bishop Ægelric had been deposed, but being specially learned in the English law he was summoned by the king's order, and conveyed thither in a car or waggon, to describe before the assembly the ancient usages of England.² At this important meeting lands belonging to the see of Canterbury were rescued from Odo's grasp, the royal rights were defined, and some benefit was afforded the people at large.

Although Lanfranc did not become a naturalised Englishman, his learning and virtue gained the general veneration of

¹ Mr. Freeman considers the figures 'probably a mere guess,' and says that he knows not whether they refer to Northumberland alone or to all the ravaged shires. —P. 316.

² This aged man had been Bishop of Selsey, near Chichester; that bishopric was about this time transferred to Chichester on account of the encroachment of the sea,

English writers. He showed contempt for the old English saints, and would have excluded Elfheah from the calendar on the score of want of learning, but yielded to the remonstrance of his friend Anselm, who pleaded on behalf of the Anglo-Saxon priest that 'righteousness was as worthy as theology.'¹

The turbulent outrages so frequently occurring in the North had provoked William's vengeance, although far from justifying his cruelty. The devastation of thirty miles of fertile country in Hampshire, full of houses and churches, which were entirely destroyed to make a wilderness, was a barbarous act instigated only by the selfish love of sport.

The exact year is not specified when this fruitful district was laid bare to form the New Forest. The cruelty was not confined to devastation. Laws enacted for the preservation of the game condemned anyone to the loss of sight who might venture to slay hart or hind within the limits of the forest. For, as the chronicler declares, the king 'loved the high deer as though he were their father;' and, in defiance of the moan of the rich and the tears of the poor, the king 'recked not of their hatred, but they must all follow his will if they would live.'²

The fens of Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire had sheltered some of the old Celtic inhabitants for some years after the settlement of East Anglia. In the eleventh century Ely was in fact an island, separated from the neighbouring solid ground by water, or by marshes not firm enough for the tread of armed soldiers. Patriotic chiefs had there formed a camp of refuge from the Norman rule. Hereward has been described as their principal leader, but of him little authentic is known. He was probably a brave but lawless man who had been concerned in despoiling the rich Abbey of Peterborough, then ruled by a Norman abbot. Edwin and Morcar, the Earls of Mercia and Northumberland, had grown weary of dependence and inertion at William's court. Edwin was slain in a skirmish with Normans; Morcar joined the insurgents at Ely, as did likewise Ethelwine, the outlawed Bishop of Durham, with other men of desperate fortunes. William saw the necessity of immediately crushing the rebellion. He attacked the isle on both sides, building a bridge on the western side, and bringing his ships up on the eastern, and fixing his head-quarters at Cambridge Castle. The courage of Morcar and his comrades drooped on

¹ Freeman's 'Norman Conquest,' iv. 441.

² The formation of the New Forest is said to have been begun between 1070 and 1081.—Freeman.

finding themselves thus hemmed in by land and water, and they surrendered. Morcar was sent to Normandy, where he remained a prisoner during William's life.¹ It was the Conqueror's politic course to show moderation in his treatment of men of rank, while he diffused the dread of his rule by severe examples of punishment amongst the soldiery and men of low degree. Had these rebels been all put to death their fate might have been forgotten. William chose that many should suffer cruel mutilations, or loss of their eyes, and thus remain to the end of their miserable lives living monuments of his vengeance. A Hungarian traveller of the nineteenth century witnessed in Bokhara an instance of similar punishment, and relates the impression produced on his mind when seeing the bleeding prisoners, who had just been blinded, staggering along unable to direct their steps.

Malcolm of Scotland had lately ravaged the coast of Durham, but his court was a refuge for the discontented English.² In August, 1072, William set forth with a large army to enforce the submission of the Scottish king, taking with him Eadric the Wild, long time the despoiler of Herefordshire, but lately admitted to 'the king's peace.' Scotland offered no resistance. William traversed Lothian and crossed the Forth, and at Abernethy met Malcolm, who was prepared to render him allegiance and to become 'his man.' As the elder Malcolm had bowed before Canute, so did the younger before William, and was received into the 'peace of his lord,' giving one of his sons as a hostage for his feudal fidelity.

William was satisfied and returned southwards. England was his kingdom beyond dispute; Scotland acknowledged him as her superior lord, and Wales was in the course of gradual subjection. Waltheof, the son of Siward, had very early submitted to the Conqueror. But when the Danish fleet arrived to assist the Northumbrian revolt, the temptation was too strong to be resisted by an earl descended from their race, and he joined their forces. Reflecting, however, upon the vengeance which had befallen Northumberland, Waltheof again submitted

¹ See the account of the revolt at Ely given by Mr. Freeman in vol. iv. of the 'Norman Conquest,' pp. 471-477, with careful discrimination between history and legend.

² While Malcolm was ravaging Durham, he heard that ships had arrived at Wearmouth, on board of which were Edgar the Etheling and his sisters, besides other exiles seeking an asylum. He hastened to invite them to his court, although he still continued to ravage the shore of Durham. He soon afterwards married Margaret.

in person, and was even received into the king's highest favour, obtaining the hand of his niece Judith in marriage. He was already Earl of Northampton and Huntingdon, and a year or two later the earldom of Northumberland was conferred upon him as the descendant of its ancient rulers. Weak and vacillating as was the character of Waltheof, he was nevertheless capable of cherishing and of carrying on a deadly feud, and by his order the whole family of 'the sons of Carl' were murdered to revenge the death of Waltheof's grandfather by Carl's hand in the days of Hardacanute.¹

No punishment for this crime is on record, and in the year 1074 he was still one of the highest men in England. Another powerful noble was Ralph, half-Breton, half-English, the Earl of East Anglia. Roger, Earl of Hereford, son of the king's favourite William Fitz-Osbern, had wavered in his loyalty; Earl Ralph had sought his sister in marriage, but the king had forbidden the union. In 1075, during William's absence in Normandy, the two earls brought about this marriage, and at the wedding feast held in Cambridgeshire with great splendour were collected numbers of the Bretons, who had settled in the East of England. A conspiracy was then hatched against the king, whose centralising system much diminished the power of provincial earls, and Waltheof was beguiled into joining the plot, but immediately afterwards repented. He hastened to Archbishop Lanfranc and told him of the oath which he had taken. Lanfranc advised him to repair immediately to the king, and crave pardon. Waltheof went to Normandy with rich gifts as an atonement, and William detained him till his return without any immediate punishment.

The Earls of Hereford and Norfolk were in open revolt, a revolt for which, as usual, numbers paid dearly. The two warlike bishops, Odo and Geoffrey of Coutances, led a mixed army of French and English, who were willing comrades in fighting against the Bretons. Roger was taken prisoner; Ralph sailed to Denmark; Norwich, the principal seat of the revolt, capitulated, and cruel mutilations awaited the prisoners.²

Waltheof returned to England a prisoner; but Lanfranc interceded for him, and his humiliation and penitence were apparently profound. But his Norman wife was his enemy, and his adversaries were eager to pounce upon his possessions. He

¹ This massacre took place in 1073. See Freeman, iv. 21, 75, 255, 525. The ultimate fate of Waltheof adds interest to all the events of his life which have been satisfactorily ascertained.

² Ralph was outlawed.—Freeman, p. 589. No new earls were appointed to the vacant earldoms. Roger died in prison.

was tried at the Pentecost Gemot of the next year, and on the ground that he had listened to a plot against the king's life and not revealed it, a charge which could not be substantiated, Waltheof was condemned to die.¹ Such an execution was without precedent for years either in England or Normandy. But the final seal was now to be put on the conquest by the death of the only remaining English earl, and on the last morning of May Waltheof was roused early to be led forth to a hill near Winchester, where he was beheaded. The English revered him as a martyr, and fifteen days after his body had been laid under the turf permission was obtained from the king, his wife Judith herself joining in the prayer, that it should be re-interred at Crowland, in Lincolnshire, at the monastery enriched by his gifts. Waltheof's love of life induced him to supplicate that he might be allowed to live as a monk, and William afterwards grieved that he had not listened to the prayer. The English Church improved, both in morals and learning, under the rule of Lanfranc, and one bright example deserves remembrance. Wimund, a Norman monk, visited England at the king's bidding, and William pressed him to accept one of the rich benefices at his disposal. But the proffer was vain. Wimund steadfastly refused to share spoils which, as he declared, had been gained by war and bloodshed. He was even so daring as to warn the king that he held England by no hereditary right, but by the gift of God and the favour of King Edward, to the prejudice of the Etheling Edgar, and of other descendants of the royal race. It is highly to William's credit that he showed continued favour to the bold remonstrant, and would next year have raised him to be Archbishop of Rouen, but Wimund determined to visit Italy, where in after years he obtained the promotion which he so well deserved. Among the Norman nobles also were not wanting instances of honourable self-denial. Gulbert was a kinsman of William, who accompanied him to the conquest of England, and had married a relation of Queen Matilda. But when William was firmly fixed on the throne, Gulbert refused English lands and honours; he chose rather to abide by his moderate inheritance in Normandy than to stain his hands with the harvest of rapine.²

Northumberland had not yet experienced its last trials. In

¹ Waltheof is said to have been tried twice: the first time by the Midwinter Gemot held at Westminster, which ordered his confinement 'in a straiter prison' at Winchester; and again by the Assembly which met at Whitsuntide, 1076, which condemned him to death.

² Wimund appears to have come over to England in 1078, and to have been offered the archbishopric of Rouen in the succeeding year.—Freeman, iv. 446-9.

the year 1080 its people took up arms against the Bishop of Durham, whom they murdered. William sent his brother Odo to wreak vengeance on the rebellious province, on which pillage and mutilations, besides executions, contrary to the king's rule, were inflicted by the Bishop of Bayeux. Not more than two years had passed after these cruel acts, when a new kind of ambition took possession of Odo's mind. Although the papal chair was not vacant, he conceived the hope of succeeding to the papacy, and found many partisans both in England and Normandy. He was on the point of sailing for Normandy with a great array, when his scheme was totally frustrated by the king. On hearing of his intention, William immediately left Normandy to meet Odo in the Isle of Wight, where he gathered together the great men of the realm to hear his charges against Odo, and rebuking his ambition, desired the assembly to pass judgment. All were silent, not daring to take part against one so powerful. William then ordered his arrest, but no one would lay hands on a bishop. William seized his brother himself. 'I am a clerk,' cried Odo. 'It is not lawful to condemn a bishop without the sentence of the Pope.' 'It is not the Bishop of Bayeux whom I arrest,' responded William, 'but the Earl of Kent, my earl whom I set over my kingdom, and from whom I demand an account of his stewardship.'

Odo was carried off to Normandy, where he remained in prison till William was dying, five years later. It is said that Lanfranc suggested to the king the plea under which the martial bishop was arrested.¹

The year of Odo's arrest is noted as a time of famine, but William's heart was not softened, and in midwinter he imposed an unusually heavy tax. While he was in Normandy news came of an approaching invasion from Denmark of overwhelming strength. King Canute determined to send an armament to avenge the fate of the Danes who fell at Senlac, and to efface the shame attending the Danish expedition to York twelve years earlier, and the King of Norway promised to join him. William hastened to England, bringing mercenary troops to be quartered on his vassals, each of whom was obliged to support a certain number according to his means. He also further oppressed England by ordering that part of the coast to be laid bare at which the Danes would probably land. Troubles, however, arose in Denmark, and the fleet did not sail. Canute was killed, and William kept his Christmas in peace in Gloucester. At this Gemot business was proposed which required 'mickle

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thought and very deep speech.' The king ordered a survey to be made throughout the kingdom, to show how all the lands were held, and the extent of every man's possessions. For this purpose four commissioners were appointed, and the result was the famous Domesday Book, which was completed in one year, and which throws great light upon the changes which took place during this reign. The inquiries were in some places resented, and even caused loss of life. The chronicler tells with indignation that every cow or swine was set down. The four most northern of our present counties, then forming Bernicia, were not included, but the word 'waste' applied to some parts of Yorkshire marked the desolation. A comparison of this register with the descriptions given of many towns in the reign of Edward shows how greatly York, Oxford, Dorchester, Derby, and Chester had suffered.¹ This survey was completed before Lammastide, 1086, and on August 1 William gathered together the largest assembly of his reign on Salisbury Plain, where sixteen years before he had reviewed his troops. Among the multitude were archbishops, earls, all the highest of the land, and all the landholders who could meet together. The decree then put forth was one of the most memorable in the whole history of England, every freeman being compelled to take an oath of fealty to King William, promising to be faithful to him within and without the realm, and defend him from all enemies. The whole assembly, after having bowed before William, took this oath, and became his men. It had been his aim to make the English an undivided people, and in this way it was accomplished by statute.² After again imposing a tax which no doubt the survey enabled him to apportion, William left England in August, 1087, never to return.

In the spring of 1067, when William paid his first royal visit to Normandy, he was received by his countrymen with joy. But far different was it when, twenty years later, he encountered hostile nobles, and the opposition of the King of France, with whom his eldest son, Robert, had been in league. The first wound which William ever received is said to have been in an engagement seven years before this time, when he was opposed by Robert at Gerberoi, and his hand was pierced by a thrust from his son's spear.³ There was a reconciliation, again interrupted by bitter enmity between father and son. Immediately

¹ Hallam, ii. 95. Scarcely any town failed to show marks of decay.

² Freeman, iv. 694. It is said that 60,000 landowners assembled on this occasion.

³ Freeman, iv. 648.

after landing in Normandy in 1087, William engaged in a border warfare to obtain the district of the Vexin from King Philip, and he wreaked cruel vengeance on the town of Mantes, destroying noble churches, the civic palace, even the cells of the monks and the houses of the citizens. But as he rode on without pity for the sufferers, William's horse stumbled, it is said on the burning embers; he received his death wound, and was carried to Rouen. He was removed for quiet nursing to a neighbouring priory, but his physicians gave him notice that the wound was mortal. Then, late as it was for penitence, the wrongs which he had inflicted on the English pressed upon his conscience; he acknowledged that he had wrongfully despoiled English landowners, and that he had driven countless multitudes to a cruel death. He could no longer blind himself by imputing to others the execution of Northumberland, and declared that he dared not hand over to another the sceptre of England disgraced by his cruelty. Still he expressed the hope that his second son, William, might be crowned by Lanfranc. Robert was not present, but by law must inherit the dukedom of Normandy. To Henry, his youngest son, he gave five thousand pieces of silver. He wished the rest of his treasures to be shared among the churches and the poor. There were state prisoners whom he was entreated to release. Among these were Wulfnoth, the brother, and Wulf, the son of Harold, also Morcar, and others. All these he was willing to free, but when asked to liberate his brother Odo, he at first refused, and afterwards, whilst yielding to solicitation, protested that when Odo should be free the misery of many would be the consequence. Thus, in pain and penitence, the great Norman conqueror expired on September 9, 1087. His sons had left the place, and his chief officers had abandoned him, carrying off whatever property they could collect; and when the Archbishop of Rouen determined that the interment should take place at Caen, in the cathedral which William had erected, it was a knight unknown to fame, named Herlwin, who stepped forward to undertake the charge.

Of his sons, Henry only was present when at length the humble procession arranged by Herlwin was met at the minster by a crowd of Norman prelates. Even at that last hour a voice was heard crying aloud of long past injustice. The Bishop of Evreux had delivered an oration in praise of the departed, extolling William as the defender both of the Church and the people, and asking the prayers of all present on behalf of his soul, when a knight named Ascelin came forth to declare in the

hearing of all present that the minster had been built on the site of his father's house, which William had taken without payment, while yet only Count of Normandy, in defiance of law and justice. Having aspersed the king as a robber, he declared that, unless he received compensation, he forbade the interment on ground which was his by right of inheritance. Some who were present attested the truth of the story, and it was needful to satisfy Ascelin's claim by a promise of full payment before the royal remains were laid in the earth.¹

William's government was very severe, and stained by frequent cruelties, but his promise to preserve the English laws and customs was in great measure kept. When he punished Odo, ordered the Great Survey, or performed any other act of importance, he assembled the Witan, and he kept the old-established feasts. He issued ordinances to regulate the relations between the French and English inhabitants of the country, each race being allowed to have in certain cases its own law. Frenchmen who had settled in England under Edward were accounted Englishmen. It was a custom of both nations that when in criminal trials there was no conclusive evidence, or when the accused appealed from the sentence, the culprit should be allowed to seek the interposition of the Almighty by subjecting himself to the risk of life. This was done under the Anglo-Saxons by the ordeal of boiling water or of heated iron, into which the supposed criminal plunged his arm or on which he laid his hand, a certain time being allowed to prove whether his innocence was or was not attested by a cure.² The Normans considered this a barbarous practice, preferring the wager of battle, another form of ordeal. William allowed of both. He forbade the sale of men into slavery in foreign lands, which had also been forbidden by Anglo-Saxon kings, and against which St. Wulfstan had preached at Bristol.

Thus, in the year 1066, England became for the first time, happily for the last time also, a conquered land. It was not England but Britain which was subjugated by the roving Northmen, and the Scandinavian invaders of the fifth and sixth centuries implanted the germs of what became the English Constitution. Some common usages were invariably

¹ Freeman, iv. 719. The promised payment was faithfully completed. We are also told of a fire at Caen on the day of the funeral which caused confusion. 'The monks alone kept on their way, singing the office for the dead.'

² Three days were allowed for the healing, a cloth sealed by the priest being pressed on the arm or hand. It is said that many persons vindicated their innocence by trials, which causes suspicion of priestly connivance. Ordeals were not abolished about the reign of Henry III.—Hallam, ii. 121, note.

found in Teutonic communities. All recognised three classes—that of the noble, the ordinary freeman, and the slave.

All acknowledged obedience to be due to a chief of royal race; but his authority was never despotic; it was modified by local and national assemblies of freemen, who claimed a right to prefer the prince of the royal house who appeared the most worthy, and even to depose a king who ruled ill. No ancient record exactly describes the mode in which the wise and noble of the land were nominated to the Witenagemot, which attended the king at stated times at Winchester, Westminster, and Gloucester.

The king did not always summon the same men, and other persons were sometimes present besides the earls and the bishops. On the great occasion when William convened the assembly on Salisbury Plain, the landholders are said to have all appeared.

Among all the northern nations the wergild, or wehrgild, the compensation for murder 'was the standard of the gradations of society.'¹ The fine decreed for the death of a king greatly exceeded that for an ealdorman, and so in proportion. So was it likewise with an oath. The oath of one man of high rank was reckoned equal to the oaths of several men of lower degree.

Those who could not pay money lost their freedom, hence the number of slaves.

Great and appalling was the change in England when some 'lords of many lordships,' sprung 'possibly from ancient earls or even kings,' were reduced to hold as poor dependents on William's bounty a small portion of those lands with which the Conqueror found it needful to reward his followers. Strange and harsh in the ears of the people was the introduction of the French language, which for a time threw English into the background. But William promised to preserve the English Constitution, and he kept his word to the letter, although he tyrannised over the people.

The English chiefs who came to him at Berkhamstead invited him to the throne, and at his coronation the appeal to the people indicated the half-elective nomination of an English king. William's greatest work was, to borrow Mr. Freeman's words, 'to weld together' the still imperfectly united provinces of England. This was gradually effected through 'the com-

¹ Hallam. See also Freeman's Lectures 'On the Origin of the English Nation,' Macmillan, xxi. and xxii. The custom was very ancient; see Homer's 'Iliad,' ix., line 626.

pression of foreign conquest,' and by his policy in this respect, and by instituting the Great Survey, the Conqueror proved himself one of the greatest princes of his age.

Happily, the English language was not lastingly supplanted. William is said to have tried to acquire it, but without success. His youngest son considered himself the better suited to be King of England because able to speak its language. And the English Constitution, which had no precise founder, had no destroyer. In other parts of Europe the customary free assemblies died out before the encroachments of princes. In England, although after the conquest 'a nobility of office,' that of *thanes* (personal servants of the king) gradually supplanted the earlier nobility of *eorls*, and the Witenagemot sank into a subservient House of Lords, the forms of a free Constitution remained, and can be traced unimpaired in their main essence for fourteen hundred years.¹ Afterwards, at the time when the old Teutonic safeguards of liberty had sunk to their lowest depression, fresh life was instilled into the great council of the nation by that brave man who 'gave to English freedom its second and more lasting shape,'—Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester. It was on the *county court* that in the early ages an English freeman chiefly relied for the maintenance of his civil rights. In that court the bishop and earl presided, or, in the earl's absence, the sheriff. The oath of allegiance was there administered to all freemen, crimes were investigated, and claims determined. The county courts survived the conquest, and 'contributed,' says Mr. Hallam, 'in no small degree, to fix the liberties of England upon a broad and popular basis.'²

¹ The word Thane, or Thegn, meant a servant, but it was thought an honour to serve the king. See Freeman's 'Old English History,' p. 41; and 'Growth of the English Constitution,' p. 18.

² 'Middle Ages,' ii. 70-72. Mr. Hallam expresses uncertainty respecting the frequency of the sittings, which might be either 'monthly, or at least more than once in the year.'

CHAPTER VI.

WILLIAM II., SURNAMED RUFUS.

A.D. 1087-1100.

THE second son of the Conqueror, who, owing to his red complexion, was surnamed Rufus, lost no time in reaching England to claim the throne left vacant by his father's death.

A council of prelates and barons assembled, and Lanfranc used all his influence in favour of Rufus, upon obtaining the future king's promise that he would follow his counsel and rule according to law. No immediate opposition was made, and William II. was crowned in the third week after the death of William I. According to his father's directions, he sent part of the royal treasures to the English monasteries, sixty pennies to each country church, and one hundred pounds to be divided in each county among the poor.¹

The prediction uttered by the Conqueror on his death-bed, that fresh dissensions would ensue upon Odo's liberation, was promptly verified. A conspiracy was formed to place Robert on the throne, instigated by Odo, who urged on the barons the superior generosity of the elder brother, and the advantage of uniting in his person the government of Normandy and the sovereignty of England.

William was holding his first Easter festival, when some of the barons went to their districts to raise troops in revolt against him.

He appealed to the English for help, and the natives flocked eagerly to the king's standard, ready to take arms against Norman chiefs, and trusting to William's promises of better laws, of milder taxation, and even of some license to hunt in their own woods. Rufus found that his chief opponents were Norman barons.

¹ 'Saxon Chronicle,' p. 463. Palgrave, iv. 18.

Rochester Castle was held against the king by Eustace, nephew of Odo, with a garrison of five hundred knights. William brought Odo before the castle, stipulating that he only granted his life on condition of immediate surrender, but after Odo's entrance the resistance was continued. The king's indignation was great. He summoned all freemen who could bear arms, on pain of being stigmatised as 'nithings,' the strongest term of reproach. At last the castle capitulated, and it was with difficulty that William was dissuaded from putting the garrison to death. Odo prayed in vain that no triumphant music should sound at his departure. When he appeared, the trumpets were blown and the English reviled him. Thus ignominiously ended the revolt of the bishop who bore so conspicuous a part in the great battle of Hastings. He speedily left England for Normandy. Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, said to be the only remaining English prelate, led his retainers against the rebels in his neighbourhood, and the Bishop of Durham, who, according to the Saxon Chronicle, had done as much harm as he could in the North, was obliged to retire to Normandy.

The estates of the rebels were divided among the king's faithful subjects. Had William's rule been equitable, he would have become a popular sovereign; but in 1089 he lost his best adviser by the death of Archbishop Lanfranc, a man generally respected by the English people. Unhappily, afterwards, he adopted for his principal counsellor a Norman adventurer, named Ralph Flambard, who, as Bishop of Durham, used all his art in raising money, and was generally detested. The king, however, is reported to have praised him as a singular example of a man who, for his master's interest, was willing to brave the vengeance of mankind.¹ The Domesday commissioners had taxed the land according to its value, as ascertained by strict inquiry. Land which could not be ploughed or would not support cattle had not previously been rated as 'fertile,' but Flambard caused a fresh measurement to be made without regard to the produce. The king's promises to relax the forest laws were utterly violated. The large circuit of the New Forest was extended by fresh seizures, and Rufus inflicted cruel mutilations and loss of sight, besides death or perpetual imprisonment, on those who dared to trespass on the space allotted to his chief amusement. War continued for several years between William and Robert. It was a family

¹ Lingard, ii. 93.

quarrel for the superior power, and was conducted much in the spirit of a tournament, the younger brother Henry being in turn the ally of each. In the year 1091 peace was arranged on the condition that either William or Robert should inherit the dominions of the other in case of survivorship.¹ After this compact William and Robert joined in the siege of Mont St. Michel, on the coast of Normandy, where Henry had taken refuge.

William having been thrown to the ground in an encounter with some knights, was on the point of being slain, when he exclaimed, 'Hold, fellow, I am the King of England!' on which his assailant raised him and brought him a fresh horse. William afterwards inquired the name of his antagonist, and took him into his service with praise, an action redounding to the credit of a king who seldom showed generosity. The granite rock of the half-isle of St. Michel was without water, and the garrison were much distressed, which induced Henry to ask Duke Robert to send him wine. Robert sent him some of the best, and granted a day's truce for the supply of water, an act of kindness inflaming the wrath of William, who hoped that his brother would yield under pressure of famine. Henry was at length obliged to capitulate, and was allowed to leave the castle with the honours of war. During some months he wandered through France with a few followers, a mere adventurer.

William being recalled from Normandy by the Scottish invasion of the northern counties under Malcolm, tranquillity was restored for a short time through the mediation of Duke Robert and Edgar the Etheling; but war soon broke out again. William visited Carlisle, which had been destroyed by the Northmen two hundred years earlier, peopled the city with Englishmen, and built a castle for their protection. Malcolm, however, probably viewed the settlement of an English colony at Carlisle as an invasion of his rights, for Cumberland had formerly been held by the heir of the Scottish crown, and the boundaries of the two kingdoms were imperfectly adjusted.² A dispute took place, and William summoned Malcolm to an assembly at Gloucester, that the English barons might pass judgment concerning it. Malcolm refused to plead his cause

¹ Palgrave, iv. 284. Lingard, ii. 82.

² By the writers of this age, says Lingard (vol. ii. 87), the name of Scotland was confined to the territory north of the Forth. The part of the North of England which now forms Cumberland and Westmoreland was at this time, and long afterwards, the scene of confused conflicts between Saxons, Scots, and Norsemen.—Burton, i. 363.

before them, and made a fresh inroad into Northumberland, where he perished in fight, having been surprised by the skill of Robert Mowbray, earl of the province. The eldest son of Malcolm perished also, and Queen Margaret only survived her husband a few days. William attempted to bring Wales into subjection, but finding it impracticable to traverse the mountains with his heavy-armed troops he imitated the policy of his father, and built castles on the English border to repress the incursions of the Welsh.

Many of those barons who had been concerned in Odo's rebellion remained disaffected to William. The most powerful of these was the Earl Mowbray, who had triumphed over Malcolm. He had inherited from his uncle, the Bishop of Coutances, two hundred and eighty manors, was allied to the highest families in England, and commanded a numerous and warlike population. He was accused of causing the ships of Norwegian merchants to be detained and plundered, and he paid no attention to the summons of the king to appear and answer the charge. William then laid siege to Tynemouth Castle, which surrendered after two months' resistance. Mowbray fixed himself with his wife at Bamborough Castle, next the sea, which was nearly impregnable; but William besieged it so closely that Mowbray, weary of confinement, escaped, and was dragged forth from Tynemouth Priory, where he had sought refuge. By William's order, Mowbray was led before Bamborough with the threat that his eyes would be put out unless the countess surrendered the castle. She yielded and threw open the gates. William summoned a council to meet at Sarum, but his justice was not tempered by mercy. The Earl of Shrewsbury purchased pardon for three thousand pounds; William of Eu, nearly related to the king, fought his accuser, was vanquished, and deprived of sight; and Robert Mowbray, son of one of the most loyal partisans of the Conqueror, was thrown into the dungeon of Windsor Castle, where he lingered in misery for thirty years.¹

Flambard had assisted the king in his confiscations of Church property. Bishoprics and livings were kept vacant or sold, and for four years after the death of Lanfranc, William declared that no one should be made Archbishop of Canterbury. But in contrast to Flambard, the worst example of a Norman bishop, another was soon to appear, combining monastic learning with singleness of heart and the intrepidity of a prophet, Anselm, Abbot of Bec. Hugh, Earl of Chester, who was establishing a

¹ Palgrave, iv. 421. Lingard, ii. 91.

monastery, invited Anselm to England, which he had before visited during the life of his friend Lanfranc. It happened that, during Lent, William, who was at Gloucester, became dangerously ill, and he invited Anselm to visit him. The good abbot did not neglect this opportunity of establishing his influence over the king's mind, and obtained promises of general improvement in the administration in case of his recovery. And to the surprise and delight of all, except, as we are assured, of the abbot himself, William declared that he would no longer delay the nomination to Canterbury, and that the holy Anselm should be the primate. When this intelligence was made known, with directions for the liberation of prisoners and forgiveness of debts due to the crown, there was general rejoicing. But, too soon for his subjects' welfare, William recovered, and proved the same implacable tyrant of the forest. He speedily cancelled his promises of pardon, and ordered captives just released to be sent back to prison. Anselm, however, continued Archbishop of Canterbury, and was soon in warm controversy with the king. William's wild extravagance rendered him always poor and always rapacious. On Anselm's promotion he offered the king a gift of five hundred pounds, but William refused to accept what he called inadequate. Anselm then distributed the money among the poor, declining to double the sum for the sake of the royal favour. 'Anselm,' says Dr. Milman, 'the monk, the philosopher, meek, unoffending in his manner, was as high and resolute in the defence of the rights and property of the Church as the boldest or the haughtiest.' At this time two competitors were urging their claims for the papacy. Anselm acknowledged Urban II. as Pope. But William forbade his subjects to admit the pretensions of either Urban or Clement till he had given his decision. A great council of bishops and nobles was assembled in March, 1095, at Rockingham Castle, in the wilds of Derbyshire, at which the bishops counselled Anselm to submit to the king's will; but Anselm declared that he could not renounce obedience to the Pope, to whom he had promised allegiance. Full of wrath at this resistance, William revoked his protection from Anselm, renounced him as archbishop, and required all present to do the same. But the barons were the first to refuse. 'Anselm,' said they, 'is our archbishop, and we cannot decline his magistracy.' The bishops hesitated; those who renounced Anselm immediately received marks of the royal favour. A truce, however,

¹ Milman's *Latin Christianity*, iii. 439. According to Lingard, Anselm was reduced to such poverty by the exactions made by Flambard, that the expenses of his household were paid by the Abbot of St. Alban's.—Lingard, ii. 97.

took place; a legate from Rome arrived in England, and at length William, by acknowledging the authority of Urban, removed the chief cause of dissension. He continued, however, to show ill-will towards the archbishop, and on returning from an unsuccessful expedition against the Welsh, accused Anselm of having contributed fewer and worse equipped soldiers than his duty demanded. Finding himself continually defied by the king and ill-supported by his order, Anselm begged permission to go to Rome. Twice he was refused; he pleaded his cause again at Winchester before the great council, and at last obtained the king's consent, given in a manner tantamount to sentence of exile. He might depart from the realm, but not carry away property. Thereupon Anselm took solemn leave of William, and desired him to accept his blessing, which William did not indeed reject, but bowed his head. 'They parted and never met again.'

It was the era, of the Crusades. In the month after Anselm's departure, Pope Urban summoned a great council to meet at Clermont, in the centre of France, and urged the clergy and barons there assembled to join in a holy war for the recovery of Jerusalem from the Mahometans. The spirit of adventure was then a ruling passion in Europe. The pilgrimages to the Holy Land, which commenced in the early ages of Christianity, were frequently enjoined by the clergy as penances for offences not punishable by the ordinary law. The desire of seeing foreign countries, poverty and idleness, continually added to the floating population, which only needed a director and a plausible pretext to go forth. But after the Council of Clermont there was a pause. Although Urban had succeeded in stirring up zeal for the great undertaking, money was wanting. Some of the continental barons pillaged villages to gain supplies, or exacted money from their serfs; others sold their possessions. Among the latter was Duke Robert, a ruined spendthrift, who joined in the cause from love of adventure, and had nothing on which to raise money excepting Normandy. He offered to make over the duchy to King William for five years for the sum of ten thousand marks, and the proposal was joyfully accepted by his brother. Robert was distinguished among the Crusaders by his bravery, and was one of the leaders in the capture of Jerusalem, July, 1099, when the dreadful massacre of peaceable and unoffending inhabitants left a deep stain on the character

¹ Palgrave, iv. 219. Anselm left England in October, 1095. Lingard calls Urban the lawful Pope. The anti-pope, Clement, was acknowledged by the German Churches.

of those engaged in what was termed a holy war.¹ It appeared probable that the duke might not survive the perils of the Crusade, and William resolved to conciliate the barons of Normandy by some exercise of justice. But Robert escaped the dangers of the war, married Sibylla, a beautiful princess of Norman race from Apulia; and it was reported in the spring of 1100 that he was on his way back to Normandy with his bride. But while he yet dallied on the way, William came to his death in the very place which beyond all others he had marked with desolation and cruelty. On August 1, the king assembled a jovial party to hunt with him in the New Forest. Some forebodings of danger alarmed the courtiers, and the king deferred his sport till the afternoon. But after partaking largely of good cheer he set off to hunt, proceeding through the forest by a path apart from that followed by his friends. His track was unknown till he was discovered by two of the company stretched on the ground expiring, and pierced by a Norman arrow. The knights left the forest in haste, eager to spread the news or to overtake the assassin who had aimed the fatal shaft.

A rumour prevailed that Walter Tyrrell had slain the king, and Tyrrell fled for his life. Baffling his pursuers, he escaped to France; and although connected with an English family of distinction, and steadily maintaining his innocence of the charge, he never ventured to return. Prince Henry, who was one of the hunting party, rode quickly to Winchester, where was the royal treasury. But another was there before him, and he found William de Breteuil already guarding treasures which he held as the property of the Duke of Normandy. Henry demanded the keys, declaring himself the lawful heir, but William forbade his entrance, alleging that, according to treaty, the kingdom was the inheritance of Robert. 'We are all,' exclaimed William de Breteuil, 'Robert's homagers. You, my lord Henry, owe him allegiance, and his absence renders our duty a stronger obligation.' Had Robert been present, or re-established in the dukedom of Normandy, his claim might possibly have been listened to. But when Henry, drawing his sword, appealed to the people, the men of Winchester immediately supported him. He only of the sons of the Conqueror had been born in England, the son of a crowned sovereign, and English was his native language. This scene took place, as we are informed, before a common charcoal-burner's cart arrived in Winchester, bringing the lifeless remains of the late dreaded king. A king whose life

¹ Palgrave, iv. 601.

was so wicked, and who had borne such enmity to the Church, was scarcely thought worthy of interment in consecrated ground. A grave was prepared in the choir of the cathedral, but no funeral obsequies were performed ; no bells tolled for one who had derided the forms of religion ; and no inscription was raised to honour the king whom, when living, none of his subjects dared to treat with contempt.¹

By his occasional liberality, his activity, and condescension, William might have easily gained popularity, had not his frequent cruelties excited general indignation. The buildings which he erected, and paid for out of taxes wrung from the people, were nevertheless the ornament of the age. He completed the White Tower begun by his father, repaired London Bridge at great cost, and erected our noble Westminster Hall. The palace of Westminster was to be 'royalty's peculiar home.' There was the king's court where justice was principally administered.²

But a great part of England, devoted to the royal forests, was inaccessible to the officers of the law. We read in the Saxon Chronicle that when William travelled across the country towards the coast, and waited for a fair wind before embarking for Normandy, his troops committed as much devastation as an invading army might have done. In the year of his death the sufferings of the people had been increased by inclement seasons, but for nothing 'did William Rufus care. He scorned the people who were dulled by misery.'

¹ Palgrave, iv. 687 ; and Lingard, ii. 102.

² Palgrave, p. 656.

CHAPTER VII.

HENRY I.

A.D. 1100–1135.

ON Sunday, August 5, Henry was presented to the people assembled at Westminster Abbey, and crowned according to the ancient usage. He declared that he owed his crown to the choice of the people, and promised many benefits to his subjects in a Charter of Liberties, a copy of which, sealed with the king's seal, was given to every sheriff, to be deposited in the treasury of an abbey. By this he restored the ancient immunities of the Church, promised not to interfere in the marriages of the nobility, and pledged himself to rule according to the laws of Edward the Confessor as amended by his father. He also conferred a very beneficial charter upon the citizens of London, and endeavoured to conciliate the people by imprisoning Flambard, the obnoxious Bishop of Durham, and recalling Anselm to Canterbury. On November 11, Henry married Edith, afterwards called Matilda, daughter of the late Malcolm and Margaret, of Scotland; a union which strengthened his hereditary title, as she was descended from the old Saxon kings, and which gave the greatest joy to the English portion of the nation now hopeless of escape from the Norman rule. The Normans and English were now finding, in spite of their different language, that they were of the same race, and began to look upon one another with increased respect. The marriage was solemnised by Anselm, and Matilda, the daughter of the sainted Queen Margaret, became so much beloved by the people, that they called her Maude the Good.¹ Flambard having escaped from the Tower, joined Duke Robert, who had returned to Normandy about a month after the death of William, and who, although occupied for the present by pleasure, was easily induced to claim the English crown.

¹ Lingard, ii. 129. Burton's 'History of Scotland,' i. 420.

At Whitsuntide, when Henry held his court, he renewed the charter, and swore in the presence of Anselm to fulfil all his promises. The English army was collected at Pevensey when Robert landed at Portsmouth. Some of the Anglo-Norman barons were favourable to Robert's pretensions; but the English were faithful to Henry, and by Anselm's influence a reconciliation took place. The brothers met in an open space between their armies and embraced.

Robert renounced all immediate claim to the English crown, on condition of receiving a pension of three thousand marks, and possession of all the castles held by Henry in Normandy, with one single exception.¹ Both princes promised to continue in amity, and to unite in punishing each other's enemies, agreeing that if either of them should die without a direct heir, the survivor should succeed to his possessions.

Twelve barons on each side pledged themselves to maintain the observance of these articles. Henry now desired by every means to lessen the influence of those powerful barons whose strength was so frequently used for the disturbance of the public tranquillity. The most powerful of these petty despots was Robert de Belesme, Earl of Shrewsbury, whose cruelty has been described as nearly unexampled. Charges sufficient to justify the issue of a summons were soon brought forward. Belesme was ordered to appear before the king's court, but obtaining permission to consult his friends, according to custom, the earl fled to his district, and, assembling his followers, bade defiance to the king. Henry began the contest with his powerful vassal by besieging his castle of Arundel, which did not surrender till the siege had lasted three months. And when he approached Bridgenorth, on the Severn, where Belesme had a garrison of seven hundred men, some Anglo-Norman barons tried to prevent further hostilities, but the English urged the king to persevere. The townsmen at length opened the gates, but Shrewsbury was still held by Belesme, and the road thither from Bridgenorth was through a narrow defile between hills covered with wood and lined by the earl's archers. Having ordered the trees to be felled, Henry marched on to Shrewsbury, and Belesme, in despair, came forth, bearing the keys of the town, to surrender at discretion. Henry did not feel himself strong enough to pass a capital sentence upon a nobleman. He granted Belesme his life on condition that he would quit the kingdom and engage never to return without receiving permission; and Belesme went to Normandy, where

¹ The castle of Domfront.—Lingard, ii. 111.

he possessed thirty-four castles. According to the treaty between the king and the duke, the enemy of the one was to be considered the enemy of both ; but Robert, although he had attacked part of Belesme's estates, did not refuse the banished earl his sympathy, and thus provoked fresh hostilities from the King of England. Robert governed Normandy ill, and Henry, always on the watch for a pretext to obtain the advantage, now declared himself the protector of the duchy. Both brothers prepared for war. Robert's fate was at length decided before the walls of Tenchebrai, in the year 1106, when he was taken prisoner by Henry, with Edgar the Etheling and four hundred knights. Edgar's inoffensive character secured him from ill-treatment ; he was also the uncle of Queen Matilda. Flam-bard and Belesme were allowed by Henry to retain a portion of their estates, but Robert was deprived both of his dukedom and his liberty. He was sent to England, where, according to report, he remained a prisoner, first at Devizes and then in Cardiff Castle, until his death, nearly thirty years after his capture.¹ Scarcely anything more is known of this unfortunate duke ; but his son William, a boy of five years old at the time of his father's capture, was befriended by the King of France, the Earl of Flanders, and all the nobles hostile to Henry. Warfare lasted for several years, and on one occasion the Kings of France and England had a fierce encounter near Noyon. Henry must have been killed had not his helmet been of proof metal, and the horse of the King of France was killed under him.

Such desperate courage and recklessness of danger were encouraged by the exercises of chivalry.

The Pope, however, at length interposed to end hostilities.

King Louis appeared with the son of Robert at the council of Rheims, and made a speech, accusing Henry of cruelty and injustice, to which the Archbishop of Rouen replied on Henry's behalf. The Pope appealed personally to Henry, and the King of England justified his conduct, declaring that Robert lost Normandy through his own misgovernment, and that, far from living in bondage, he dwelt in a royal castle and was treated like a prince who had retired from government.² For his nephew William, Henry declared his affection, and that he would gladly have educated him with his own son. A treaty of peace was concluded. Henry obtained Normandy, and the

¹ About ten years afterwards Henry again arrested Belesme, and confined him in Wareham Castle for the rest of his life.

² Lingard, ii. 121. It would be interesting to know how far this statement was true. Robert, however, died in confinement at the age of eighty.

King of France accepted the homage of Henry's son, also named William.

Henry now prepared to return to England, from which he had been absent four years. He was at Barfleur with his son and a large retinue, when he was entreated by a Norman named Fitz-Stephen to make the passage in his ship, saying that his own father had conducted the vessel which carried William the Conqueror to Hastings. Henry had already agreed to cross the Channel in another ship, but consented to trust his son and other treasures to Fitz-Stephen's care. Henry embarked at sunset, and a little later Fitz-Stephen started, with mariners excited by wine and revelry; and in their eagerness to overtake the king's ship, the vessel crossed a dangerous part of the Channel and was driven upon a rock. The prince was lowered into a boat, and might have escaped, had not he heard the cries of his half-sister, and returned for her, upon which the boat sank from the multitude who crowded into it. The vessel went down with three hundred persons; only one man was saved, Fitz-Stephen preferring death when he found that the prince had perished. Henry having arrived safe at Southampton, was anxious for news, which none of the courtiers dared to reveal, till a young page threw himself weeping at his feet and told the sad tale. It is said that Henry never smiled again after this heavy sorrow. Queen Matilda had died two years previously, and the king's only legitimate heir was his daughter Matilda, who had married the Emperor of Germany, and was a widow. The prospect of a female reign was unpopular in England, and the general wish inclined in favour of Robert's son; but Henry resolved to maintain his daughter's claim, and viewed the pretensions of his nephew with much jealousy, till the life of that young prince was ended in 1127 by a wound received in battle.

Matilda, or, as she was generally termed, Maude, was unwilling to leave Germany upon the chance of a doubtful succession, but submitted to her father's will, and was met, on her arrival in England, by her uncle, King David of Scotland.

A general assembly was held in December, 1126, at Windsor, which was attended by King David and by 'all the head men of England, both clergy and laity.'¹ Before them Henry explained his daughter's claim, she being descended on her mother's side from Cerdic and Egbert, and also a granddaughter of William the Conqueror. The king's influence secured general acquiescence, and after King David, Stephen,

¹ Saxon Chronicle.

Earl of Boulogne, nephew of Henry, claimed the first place in swearing allegiance.¹ Fulk, Earl of Anjou, had joined the crusade, leaving his French dominions to his young son Geoffrey, who was called Plantagenet, from the plant 'genet' or 'genista,' which he commonly wore on his helmet instead of a plume. Henry had been so much pleased with the noble appearance of this young earl, that he wished to become his patron, and gave him his first horse and suit of mail at Rouen when he was knighted. He now hoped to strengthen his daughter's cause by marrying her to Geoffrey, which he arranged without consulting his barons, according to custom, and with little consideration of the parties themselves. 'Howbeit,' says the Saxon Chronicle, 'the marriage displeased both the French and the English.'

Matilda was several years older than Geoffrey, and their want of concord proved a continual source of disquietude to the king. Henry was also for several years involved in disputes with his clergy and the see of Rome respecting investiture, or the right of nominating bishops. According to ancient usage, English bishops were elected by the Witan 'on the testimony of the clergy and people.'

As the feudal power increased, the crown extended its pretensions, and each new bishop or abbot, like a knight or baron, was summoned to do homage to the king as his superior.

The claim which William the Conqueror made for power over the Church was met by opposing claims on the part of the famous Pope Hildebrand, Gregory VII., who wished that every bishop should consider himself the liegeman of the Pope and of no other sovereign. Kings were naturally averse to surrender their accustomed privilege, and many of their prelates sided with them. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, supported the papal views, undertook a journey to Rome to negotiate the matter, remaining consequently for some time under Henry's displeasure.

At length, by a compromise, it was agreed that Henry might continue to nominate the heads of the Church, he promising not to make use of the revenues of vacant bishoprics, which engagement, however, he frequently violated.² The Saxon Chronicle relates that on the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury and of the Bishop of Lincoln, in 1123, the king

¹ David did homage as Earl of Huntingdon, which title he appears to have acquired by his marriage with the heiress of Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland and Huntingdon.—Burton's 'History of Scotland,' p. 43.

² Lingard, ii. 118.

summoned all his bishops and thanes to his Witan at Gloucester, authorising them to choose whomsoever they would to be primate, and declaring that he would confirm their choice. But a contest ensued between the bishops under the direction of the Bishop of Salisbury, who was at the same time Lord Chief Justice, Lord Chancellor, and Lord Treasurer, 'and swayed all England' on the one part, and the prior and monks of Canterbury on the other. The Bishop of Salisbury prevailed, and a clergyman of St. Osyth, in Essex, was chosen and nominated by the king. But the clergy of Canterbury remonstrated against the appointment, and many of the earls refused to acknowledge him.

After consecration, the new archbishop proceeded to Rome for the pall, but the Pope at first refused to see one who had been elected in opposition to the monks of Canterbury. 'But that,' writes the old chronicler, 'which overcometh all the world, namely, gold and silver, overcame Rome also, and the Pope relented and gave him his pall, and the archbishop swore obedience to him in all things.'¹ The severity with which Henry punished crime spread great terror among the people, who believed him, it is said, to be the 'Lion of Justice' foretold by the impostor Merlin. The Saxon chronicler describes a Witenagemot held in Leicestershire in the year 1124, when forty-four thieves were hanged, more than had ever been executed before at one time, and six men, according to the barbarous vengeance of that age, were deprived of sight. 'God seeth,' says the writer, 'that the miserable people is oppressed with all unrighteousness: first, men are deprived of their property, and then they are slain. Full heavy a year was this; he who had any property was bereaved of it by heavy taxes and assessments, and he who had none starved with hunger.' The right of coining money had for some time been allowed to different persons who paid the king largely for the privilege, and the coin was in consequence debased; while the coiners, who amassed great wealth, screened themselves from punishment by making presents to the king. This was one of the great evils of which Henry promised redress by the charter granted at his accession.

In the twenty-fifth year of his reign the abuse had become so general that hardly one penny in twelve would pass at the market. The pence were of silver, and bore the stamp of a cross dividing them easily into halves and quarters, so that they were sometimes cut into half-pennies and farthings. At length the king caused

¹Chronicle, p. 491. See St. Giles's note on the boldness of this remark.

all the coiners to be summoned before the Court of Exchequer at Winchester, to be examined by the High Treasurer, the Bishop of Salisbury. When found guilty, they immediately suffered the cruel punishment of the amputation of the right hand; and of more than fifty thus summoned, only four escaped this punishment.

The custom of Purveyance, that is for the king's retinue to seize the goods of the people without payment, was foremost among grievances.

'Wherever the king went,' says the Saxon Chronicle, 'his train fell to plundering his wretched people, and withal there was much burning and manslaughter.' These offences, after long connivance, were at length brought to judgment by order of Henry, who is said to have been startled at the solitude of the country through which he travelled, and those found most guilty of these exactions suffered punishment. A greater approach to order and justice was made in this reign compared with the preceding, but taxes were wrung from the people in the most rapacious manner. The year 1110, for instance, is marked in the Chronicle as 'a year of much distress from the taxes which the king raised for his daughter's dowry;' indeed, whenever he wanted money, it was exacted by force from the reluctant grasp of his subjects.

Henry carried his troops farther into Wales than his predecessors had done, and succeeded in bringing the refractory natives of that country to submission. In the early part of this reign a large number of emigrants arrived in England who had been driven from their homes by an inundation of the Rhine, and Henry allotted to them the town of Haverfordwest and a district in Pembrokeshire. They were an industrious people, who pursued the cultivation of the soil as well as the manufacture of cloth, and under the protection of the English kings, to whom they were always faithful, they defeated every attempt of the Welsh princes to expel them. The district to the west of the river Cleddy, in South Wales, in which these emigrants settled, has been called 'Little England beyond Wales.' Travelers have frequently of late years expressed surprise at finding in so remote a district people who spoke English and did not call themselves Welshmen.¹ In the year 1122, Henry spent his Christmas at Norwich, in the castle belonging to Bigod, Earl of

¹ Lingard, ii. 146; and 'Pembrokeshire,' in 'Penny Cyclopaedia.' Thierry describes these 'Flemings,' as they have been called, as men of arms who had been in the pay of Henry. According to him, Richard, the Norman Count d'Eu, settled in Pembrokeshire by force of arms in this reign, and received the surname Strongbow.—Thierry, ii. 207.

Norfolk, and conferred on that city its first charter, placing it under the separate jurisdiction of its own magistrates, with privileges similar to those of the citizens of London. The enterprising Flemings had for some time resorted to Norwich to purchase English wool, and soon after the grant of this charter they began to settle in the city, introducing the rudiments of that worsted manufacture which afterwards became a flourishing trade.¹

After the death of the good Queen Maude, Henry married Adelaide, daughter of the Duke of Louvain, the ex-empress remaining the direct heir of the monarchy. The Saxon Chronicle frequently refers to the superstitious fear with which in the twelfth century men looked upon all natural phenomena. In the year 1135 King Henry went over sea to Normandy, on August 1. The voyage was a long one. 'On the second day, as the king lay asleep in the ship, the day was darkened so that the sun appeared like a moon three days old, with the stars shining at midday.' A great fear seized all the royal attendants who witnessed this eclipse of the sun, 'that some great calamity might fall on them. And *so it was*, for the same year the king died in Normandy on the day after the feast of St. Andrew.' He died from an attack of fever which followed the exertion of hunting, though his death has been also ascribed to over-indulgence in eating lampreys. His remains were brought to England and interred in the abbey which he had founded at Reading. At this period all learned books were written in Latin, and those who studied philosophy or science read only those works which had survived the wreck of the Roman Empire. But the rich and powerful among the nobility, and the ladies, understood no language but the Gallo-Norman, generally introduced after the conquest, and knowledge of which was a passport to office.² To please the court and the highborn, a new race of versifiers arose who wrote or recited in the Gallo-Norman tongue, and these poets were encouraged by both the queens, Matilda and Alice. The barbarous treatment which Henry inflicted on an unfortunate poet shows that, although he had been surnamed 'Beauclerk,' and was not ignorant of learning, the king's heart was unsoftened by humanity. Luke de Barré, a poet who had

¹ See remarks in Stark's 'Rivers of Norfolk,' and Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 383. When the Flemings² settled in Norfolk, in the reign of the second Henry, there were already 'several guilds of weavers.'

² Queen Matilda, who had been educated in a convent, appears to have been acquainted with the learned languages as well as with church music. — Pearson, p. 306.

fought against Henry in the last war, was sentenced to lose his eyes. Charles the Good, Earl of Flanders, who was present, remonstrated against this punishment, saying that it was against the usage of civilised nations thus severely to punish a knight who had drawn his sword at the bidding of his lord. But Henry refused to pardon one who unhappily had irritated him by his pen far more than by his sword. 'He has made me,' said the king, 'the subject of satire, and has held me up in his poems to the derision of my enemies.' The mandate was executed, and the wretched troubadour in his agony broke from his tormentors and dashed out his brains against the wall.¹

Up to this time it had not been unusual for the clergy to marry, although synods had continually urged them to live a single life. Henry exacted fines from those who thus exposed themselves to censure, and many clergymen were treated in consequence with great rigour. On one occasion, two hundred of the clergy, clad in the dress of their orders, met the king in London, appealing to his compassion, but he turned away with insulting derision, and the queen, whose intercession they implored, dared not interfere.

At this time the best physicians were found among the Moors in Spain, and many Englishmen resorted to the banks of the Ebro for the instructions of Arabian philosophers. After the return of the Crusaders from the East, more architectural decoration was introduced, examples of which, with figures carved in bas-relief, are seen in Worcester Cathedral and the cloisters at Westminster. Rochester Cathedral was built in Henry's reign.²

Although the greater number of men were very ignorant, some, animated by an ardent desire for learning, undertook long journeys in quest of knowledge. The establishment of Cambridge University is ascribed to Joffrid, Abbot of Crowland, who prepared a large barn as a hall for the scholars, and brought teachers from France, where he had been educated.³ Tales of enchantment and knight-errantry were the favourite reading of the highborn; and Geoffrey of Monmouth embellished his history of Britain with fictions about Arthur and his knights and a story of King Lear, on which Shakspeare has founded his play. Henry added a menagerie of wild beasts to the royal park at Woodstock, where lions, leopards, and camels were beheld with wonder.

On the death of Henry a period of rapine and confusion

¹ Lingard quotes from 'Orderic,' ii. 148.

² Flaxman.

³ Lingard, ii. 153. This was in the year 1110.

ensued. 'Soon,' says the Saxon Chronicle, 'did this land fall into trouble, for every man began to rob his neighbour as he might.' Before law was well established, a state of misrule commonly followed the death of a sovereign. Men fancied that when the throne was vacant, no punishment could be enforced for violation of 'the king's peace,' and justice was suspended.

Henry had increased the number of the royal forests, in direct violation of his promises, and guarded them by the most rigorous laws. Even his barons were forbidden to hunt except by his permission. The general desire after his death was to enjoy an amusement which had been so jealously forbidden. 'The whole country,' says a contemporary writer, 'had been covered with beasts of chase, which now disappeared as it were by miracle. While Henry lived you might have seen herds of a thousand together; within a few days after his death you could not discover two herd of deer in the whole forest.'¹

A short time before his death Henry, in the presence of several noblemen, pronounced his will, leaving all his lands on both sides of the sea to his daughter Matilda and her heirs for ever, and desiring that, after payment of all debts and obligations, the remainder of his effects should be given to the poor.

¹ Lingard ii. 157.

CHAPTER VIII.

STEPHEN.

A.D. 1135-1154.

HENRY'S efforts to establish the claim of his daughter Matilda proved that he must have been well aware of the dislike with which the reign of a queen would be regarded by Norman barons.¹ Among the peers who in obedience to Henry's will had promised allegiance to Matilda, a foremost place was held by Stephen, Earl of Blois and Boulogne, who was expected to prove the chief supporter of her throne. Immediately after the king's death, however, he landed in England to try his chance of obtaining the crown while Matilda was still on the Continent. The townsmen of Dover and Canterbury declined to admit him within their walls; but the citizens of London were eager to proclaim him king, and his coronation took place on December 22, although neither the prelates nor barons of the realm had, with few exceptions, approved his accession to the throne. The scruples of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who officiated, were removed by the bold assertion of Hugh Bigod, steward of the royal household, that Henry had on his death-bed expressed his wish that Stephen should succeed him. To those averse to a female reign the pretensions of Stephen were irresistible. His mother was a daughter of William the Conqueror, consequently he was a nephew of the late king, and by his marriage to Matilda, the niece of Henry's popular queen, the heiress of Boulogne, he had acquired that earldom. The Bishop of Winchester was his younger brother, which caused that city to declare in his favour, and his bravery and general courtesies had made him the most popular nobleman in England.

¹ 'The barons,' says Lingard, 'revolted from the idea of a female reign, a species of government new in the annals both of England and Normandy' (vol. ii. 130). See also 'Middle Ages,' ii. 126, where Hallam expresses his doubt whether a female monarch was ever approved in the early periods of our history.

He solemnly promised not to keep vacant bishoprics for his own profit, or to interfere with either clergy or laymen in their forest rights. He rewarded his adherents liberally from the royal treasury, and the nation appeared to acquiesce in his sovereignty; even Robert, Earl of Gloucester, Matilda's half-brother and chief adviser, attending his court. One of Stephen's first public acts was to appear as chief mourner at Henry's funeral at Reading. He then convened a large assembly of prelates and barons at Oxford, where he renewed his promises of ruling with justice and lenity; and the bishops on their side repeated their vows of allegiance, now sanctioned by the Pope, adding, however, the condition, not unusual among Anglo-Saxons, that faith be kept as long as the king maintain his engagements.¹ While Stephen was unopposed in England the ex-empress and Geoffrey entered Normandy, but were driven back into their own territories by the Normans in consequence of the excesses committed by their Angevin followers. In England, the first who drew his sword on behalf of Matilda was her uncle, King David, who probably thought that out of these divisions Scotland might hope to gain an additional province. Stephen advanced as far as Durham with a large army, and peace was speedily arranged by his admitting Prince Henry of Scotland to be his liegeman for Carlisle, Doncaster, and Huntingdon. This peace only lasted two years, being broken by David, who crossed the border in the year 1138, urged on by the ex-empress, and complaining that Stephen's engagement had not been duly fulfilled. David is reported to have been a pious king, but as soon as the note of war sounded between Scotland and England, he was followed over the border by a wild, undisciplined host, some of whom came from the extreme North, over which he had no control. It is said that he was afterwards bitterly repentant of the cruel excesses committed by the army which he could not properly command.² The state of the North was dreadful when Thurstan, the aged archbishop, assembled barons of the province at York, summoning the curates to bring the bravest of their parishioners, and exhorted all to make a determined effort against the common enemy. The great battle then fought at Northallerton, in the North Riding, has been called 'the Battle of the Standard,' from the singular standard round which the English rallied, a great machine like a vessel with a tall mast, at the top of which was fixed a silver box containing the holy sacrament. Close to this stood Walter Espec, a venerable warrior, who addressed the Normans with heroic

¹ Lingard, ii. 161, note.

² Burton, p. 60.

spirit, and giving his hand to the general, William of Almarle, promised either to conquer or die.¹ The Scottish troops were totally routed, with the loss, it is said, of ten thousand men, but still David remained on the English side of the border, and proceeded to besiege Wark Castle, in Northumberland. Cardinal Alberic, a papal legate then in England, endeavoured to effect peace, which was not arranged till the next year. Stephen, although victorious in the late battle, gave up Northumberland to Prince Henry of Scotland, retaining only Newcastle and Durham.²

Meantime England suffered from the oppressive exactions of numerous tyrants, upon whom Stephen was unable to enforce justice. The strong hand of the Conqueror and of Henry maintained order; but now that the throne was weak, the great barons, each possessing a castle and armed retainers, plundered their neighbours, defied the king's officers, and confined prisoners in dungeons below their banqueting halls, where they were often cruelly tortured. Even abbeyes and churches were occasionally converted into castles, and could only be reduced to submission by a regular siege. A great war arose between the king and the Earl of Chester, 'not,' says the Chronicle, 'because the king did not give him all that he could ask, even as he did to others, but that the more he gave them the worse they always carried themselves to him.' Nor was the influence of the Church to be reckoned upon on the side of peace and order. At this period nearly all the English bishops wore arms, joined in war, and shared in its cruelties, and, following their example, many of the clergy were lawless and violent men. Yet the Church threw her ample shield over her clergy, and resented as an invasion of Church property the seizure of what had been the palaces of bishops, even when they had been turned into military fortresses. 'To seize, maltreat, or imprison; still more to reach with the sentence of the law, any of these clerical personages, was accounted impiety and sacrilege.'³ About three years after his accession, Stephen ventured to attack the military bishops who opposed his rule.

Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, had been Henry's first minister, and still exercised much influence. He was accompanied on public occasions by a numerous retinue of knights, and his

¹ This speech, which was probably improved by Abbot Ailred, the historian, 'is,' says Mr. Burton, 'thoroughly and exclusively Norman, with all the Norman's high spirit, and his contempt of the rest of mankind.'

² The Battle of the Standard was not won by Stephen in person, but by his northern leaders.

³ Milman's 'Latin Christianity,' iii. 411.

nephews, the Bishops of Lincoln and Ely, likewise fortified their castles and lived amidst military parade. Stephen soon had reason to believe that all these prelates were his secret enemies, and the partisans of Matilda. The Bishops of Salisbury and Lincoln were suddenly arrested, and required to surrender their castles. The Bishop of Ely was in the castle of Devizes, to which Stephen laid siege; and on the third day Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, was led, pale and faint, to the gate of the castle, where he implored the bishop, his nephew, to submit without further delay. Stephen had sworn that he should not taste food until the castle surrendered. Devizes yielded, it is true, but the king had roused a powerful enemy by thus laying hands on members of the sacred order. His conduct was, however, defended by the Archbishop of Rouen, on the plea that the bishops had disobeyed the canons by which the clergy were debarred from every kind of military pursuit.

When Henry united his daughter to Geoffrey, Earl of Anjou, he had hoped to strengthen, but in reality he weakened, her chance of attaining the throne. The conduct of Geoffrey was indeed the reverse of conciliating. When he attempted to gain possession of Normandy he was driven back into Anjou, and he never attempted to enter England. But in the twelfth century, women as well as Churchmen could lead armies, and the dispute between Stephen and the clergy emboldened Matilda to make an effort for the throne of her father. On the last day of September she landed in Suffolk, bringing only a hundred and forty knights, but relying on her half-brother Robert, Earl of Gloucester. Matilda's first place of refuge was with her step-mother, the ex-queen Alice, in the strong castle of Arundel. Stephen soon appeared before the castle, but such was his infatuation or weakness (inexplicable to historians), that he allowed his royal prize to escape, and England was exposed to all the horrors of civil war. The garrisons of the royal fortresses remained true to Stephen; the places held by the Earl of Gloucester raised the standard of Matilda; while the majority of the barons shut themselves up in their castles without exerting themselves in behalf of either competitors. The execution of justice was suspended, and the weak were helpless victims of oppression and extortion. The Earls of Chester and Gloucester gave battle to Stephen when he besieged Lincoln Castle. Stephen's cavalry fled, but he continued to fight on foot with the bravery of despair, till taken prisoner and conducted by the Earl of Gloucester to Matilda. Matilda, who owed her life and liberty to the chivalrous generosity of Stephen at Arundel,

was not eager to return the obligation. Stephen was loaded with chains, and confined in Bristol Castle. The cause of Matilda was now triumphant, but could only be maintained by the consent of the Bishop of Winchester, the Pope's legate, and the brother of the captive king. Stephen's attacks on the bishops had estranged him from his brother's cause, and he agreed to meet Matilda on the downs near Winchester, on March 2, 1141. There, under the cloudy sky, Matilda swore, her brother and his friends pledging their word in confirmation, that if the bishop and the Church would acknowledge her for 'England's Lady,' she would appoint him her first minister. The bishop ratified the pledge, and on the next day she was solemnly conducted to Winchester Cathedral. He afterwards summoned a council, to which he explained his reasons for transferring his allegiance to Matilda.

He contrasted the tranquillity which England had enjoyed during the last reign with the confusion of the present, and condemned the king, his brother, for breaking his promises and injuring the Church. On the second day of the council arrived a deputation of the citizens of London to plead for the liberation of Stephen. These citizens were a powerful order in the State, and held rank as barons. They were influenced, however, by the bishop's arguments, and Matilda was admitted into London. She then gave orders for her coronation, but by her arrogant and exacting conduct she speedily disgusted the citizens, and Stephen's consort, also named Matilda, availed herself of her rival's unpopularity. A body of horse, under Stephen's banner, appeared on the south side of London; the bells sounded the alarm; the populace took up arms; and the Empress Matilda would have been made prisoner if she had not quickly mounted her horse and saved herself by flight. The tide of success had now turned; the Bishop of Winchester deserted Matilda; her brother, the Earl of Gloucester, was taken prisoner, and after some time exchanged for Stephen. At length, after many changes, Stephen himself besieged Matilda in Oxford Castle, and she again, during the frost of a most severe winter, had recourse to flight. She crossed the Thames, which was frozen, reached Abingdon on foot, and thence rode briskly to Wallingford, an expedition which was thought extraordinary even in those days of hardihood. For some time the strength of the two parties remained nearly balanced; Stephen was nominally acknowledged in the eastern, Matilda in the western half of the country. Matilda at length, in despair of obtaining any real power over the land, withdrew

into Normandy; but Stephen continued in perpetual conflict with the barons and the bishops whom he had so frequently offended. Thus the leading men of England began to fix their hopes on the young Prince Henry, son of Geoffrey and Matilda, who in 1150 came to England at the age of sixteen, and received knighthood from his uncle, the King of Scots. Geoffrey, always hated by the people of Normandy, had made over that province to his son. When he died shortly afterwards, Henry inherited the earldom of Anjou, and by his marriage with Eleanor, the divorced wife of the King of France, he acquired the large duchy of Aquitaine. When this young prince landed in England to assert his mother's claim, a general demonstration took place in his favour as the true descendant of two races of British kings.

The death of Eustace, Stephen's eldest son, rendered a reconciliation the easier; and by means of the Archbishop of Canterbury and other 'wise men,' a treaty was arranged—Stephen adopting Henry as his son and successor, and Henry swearing fealty to Stephen for the remainder of his reign. The earls and barons concurred in these conditions, and the two princes, to exhibit their harmony, visited together the cities of Winchester, London, and Oxford, and were everywhere received with joyful acclamations.

Only a few months later, Stephen's death took place at Canterbury. Never, since the Danish invasions, had England presented such a scene of misery as during the nineteen years when he bore the title of king. Before his accession he was the most popular nobleman in England, esteemed for his courtesy and kindness; but he found himself when king too weak to preserve order. The tyranny of powerful barons proved more oppressive under him than the severe government of the Conqueror himself. During the civil war the cities of Winchester and Worcester, and the rich and populous town of Nottingham, were set on fire, and numbers of the inhabitants perished in the flames. 'Then,' says the Saxon Chronicle, 'was corn dear, and flesh, and cheese, and butter, for there was none in the land; wretched men starved with hunger; some lived on alms who had been erewhile rich, some fled the country; never was there more misery, and never acted heathens worse than these' (the knights and barons engaged in this predatory strife).

The wretched fugitives thus driven from their homes usually retired to the shelter of some monastery, built their miserable hovels against the walls of the church, and were in part supported by the charity of the monks. Occasionally even

the churches, and those who served them, were swept away by lawless banditti, against whom the law afforded no protection.

Abbot Martin, of Peterborough, 'was so fortunate,' says the Saxon chronicler,¹ 'as to preserve his abbacy through all this evil time, *with many difficulties*, providing the monks and guests with all necessaries, and keeping up much alms in the house.' He planted a vineyard, and 'made many works and improved the town; and he was a good monk and a good man, and therefore beloved by all the good.' In this reign Orderic, the early historian, was compelled, through age and infirmities, to close his narrative. He was of English birth, and gained his first learning at a priest's school in Shrewsbury, whence in his eleventh year he was sent to St. Evroul, in Normandy, and where, by his own account, for fifty-six years he devoted his life to writing.²

¹ At the end of the Saxon Chronicle.

² See note in Lingard's 'History,' ii. 173.

CHAPTER IX.

HENRY II.

A.D. 1154-1189.

At the beginning of winter, Henry, son of the ex-empress, succeeded to the crown without opposition, and was detained six weeks in the harbour of Barfleur impatiently waiting to cross the Channel. Meanwhile, such tranquillity prevailed in England, says an old chronicler, as had rarely been known after a monarch's death, 'for the love and fear which the people felt for Duke Harry, their future sovereign.'¹ Henry was just twenty-one years of age.

From his father, the Earl of Anjou, by his own marriage with Eleanor of Poitou, and as the heir of the Conqueror's dominions, he could claim authority over a third part of France, a greater extent of territory than was held by his own feudal superior, the King of France himself.² The coronation was celebrated at Winchester, 'before an immense concourse of people;' and after granting a charter in the usual form, which guaranteed to the nation all former rights and privileges, Henry induced the assembled barons and prelates to swear allegiance to his son William as his heir, and in case of that child's death, which soon after occurred, to Henry, who was still in the cradle.

After the unexampled disorder and wretchedness of the last reign, it was needful for the sovereign to take strong measures for the re-establishment of authority. Henry soon proceeded to expel the foreign mercenaries, and to depose 'the pseudo-earls' on whom Stephen had lavishly bestowed the chief treasures at his command. Before Stephen's time, every earl or

¹ Roger of Wendover, i. 522.

² Lingard, ii. 189. Thierry's 'Norman Conquest,' ii. 243-4.

count had charge of a district from which he derived his income; but these 'pseudo,' or false earls, as they were called, held no proper jurisdiction, and their soldiers were supported in great measure by the people whom they oppressed. Eleven hundred castles are said to have been erected in the late reign, in each of which ruled a baron or earl, like a petty king, tyrannising over dependents, and frequently at war with his neighbours. The expulsion of the foreign mercenaries was a highly popular measure, but it was not without difficulty and danger that Henry could effect the destruction of the rebel castles.

In the same month that Henry was crowned, Nicholas Breakspeare, the only Englishman who has ever been raised to the highest place in the Catholic Church, was chosen Pope. After having filled the humble position of serving-lad to the monks of St. Alban's, Breakspeare left England in search of learning, and finding favour with the clergy became by degrees, first, abbot of the French monastery which he had entered, afterwards cardinal, and finally supreme head of the Church. Through the Church alone in this age could a man of humble birth ascend to the highest eminence. All professions were entered through its portals, for if a man wished to become a lawyer, statesman, or artist, his first step was to put himself in training for the religious life. Except for the highest nobles, there was no other path to greatness.¹ From the English Pope, who took the title of Adrian IV., Henry obtained permission to attempt the subjugation of Ireland, which still remained under the rule of petty kings, and was, for the most part, in a state of disorder. When, as a dutiful son of the Church, the king besought the Pope to sanction his enterprise, Adrian assented, but at the same time declared that all the islands which received Christianity belonged of right to St. Peter and the Holy See, a claim which had never before been enforced in Christendom. He likewise stipulated that every house should pay its annual tax of a penny to Rome.² Owing to other difficulties, Henry deferred for many years attempting the conquest of Ireland. A task was before him of far greater difficulty than the reduction of the rebel castles, that of making the law uniform, and of withstanding the increasing authority of the Church.

Soon after Henry's accession, Archbishop Theobald recommended to his notice a young clergyman named Thomas Becket,

¹ Dr. Hook's '*Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*,' ii. 368.

² Dean Milman's '*Latin Christianity*,' iii. 409.

the son of a London citizen, who had, by his assistance, pursued legal studies under the most learned professors of Europe, and who had shown great capacity for business when opposing the claims of Stephen at the court of Rome. The archbishop made Becket Archdeacon of Canterbury, and Henry appointed him his Chancellor.

Although at this period there was no separate Court of Chancery, the chancellor was the king's private secretary, assisted in the king's court, and had great influence in the Church. Becket was a member of the royal household, and devoted himself zealously to the king's service. Offices were heaped upon him, and, as warden of Eye Castle, he was the superior of a hundred and fifty knights.¹

The rapid improvement of the kingdom was ascribed to the efforts of the new chancellor, joined to those of the chief justiciary, the Earl of Leicester. Property was restored to its rightful owners, agriculture was encouraged, and gangs of robbers were suppressed, so that merchants were able to travel through England in safety, and 'even the *Jews* could collect their debts.'

In his tastes and manners Becket was far more courtly than the king, and surpassed other courtiers in the sumptuousness of his table. He frequently appeared as the king's representative, and rendered the court so popular that the sons of the nobility were sent thither to be trained in martial exercises and courtesy under his care, the young Prince Henry being one of his pupils. As the number of his visitors often exceeded the accommodation provided, it is said that Becket ordered the floor of his large dining-hall to be daily covered with fresh rushes, so that those who could not obtain seats at the table might lie down when partaking of food without injury to their clothes. When a difficulty arose between the Kings of England and France, Henry sent his favourite minister as ambassador to Paris to negotiate a marriage between his son and the daughter of Louis.

The French people were astonished to behold the princely style in which the chancellor travelled through France. On entering the towns, his train is said to have been led by two hundred and fifty singing-boys, followed by hounds in couples, baggage-waggons containing his kitchen, wine, plate, and abundant change of garments, after which Becket and his friends rode along on horseback. He scattered rich gifts freely among the French courtiers, and even the Parisians could not

¹ Dr. Hook's 'Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury,' ii. 367.

easily forget the extravagance of a dish of eels costing 100 shillings.

In spite of these friendly demonstrations, war soon afterwards broke out between England and France for the earldom of Toulouse, which Henry claimed on behalf of his queen. To raise a sufficient force, the king, by Becket's advice, levied a tax of 3*l.* on every knight's *fee*, or estate, instead of claiming his personal service, and enlisted a considerable army of mercenaries for three months. The number of knights' fees is said to have been 60,000, the same as computed by William the Conqueror. When bishops and abbots holding estates tried to excuse themselves from obligation on account of their sacred profession, the chancellor rejected their plea, urging that they were bound by the same duty towards their sovereign.

This is the first recorded instance of the substitution of pecuniary payment for personal service, which was called scutage, or *escuage*.¹ The payment fell oppressively, no doubt, on the poorer tenants, but, in spite of the risk of life and limb, an encounter in arms was highly popular among the nobles. Malcolm, King of Scotland, one of the petty princes of Wales, and the King of Aragon, lent their willing service to King Henry, and the ablest officer in the army appears to have been the Rev. Chancellor Becket. Armed with helmet and coat of mail he marched at the head of a band of seven hundred knights enlisted at his own cost, took castles which had been thought impregnable, and unhorsed a valiant Frenchman in knightly encounter. The English army was approaching Toulouse, when the King of France threw himself into the city with a small force, upon which Becket urged Henry to proceed to an immediate assault, as it would ensure the payment of a heavy ransom in case the king were captured; but he recoiled from such extreme measures against one who was in France his own feudal superior, and by his delay the French knights were enabled to hasten to the aid of Louis. The King of France was not ungrateful for this act of forbearance. The claims of the two potentates were satisfactorily adjusted, and the young Prince Henry was allowed, as the future heir to the duchy of Normandy, to do homage to the King of France.

The increasing pretensions of the Church of Rome had long been in conflict with the independence of the Christian nations. Gregory VII., better known as Hildebrand, who became Pope about the year 1073, had asserted his sole right to appoint bishops, and by the mighty arm of excommu-

¹ Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' i. 208, note. Thierry, ii. 260.

nication constituted himself the arbiter among kings, and the spiritual director of Europe. Even William the Conqueror, although styled a good friend to the clergy, had in his time withstood some of the papal pretensions. He had forbidden the clergy to inflict excommunication on any of his subjects without his sanction, and to leave England unless by his permission. He was, however, induced to sanction the separation of the ecclesiastical courts of justice from those of the laity. The clergy upon this not only claimed the sole right of adjudging the punishment due to offending members of their own body, but also greatly added to the number of those subject to their tribunal.

Many who were but formally connected with ecclesiastical offices received the *tonsure* or outward sign of the priesthood, and the clergy accounted themselves the only judges in cases of perjury, sacrilege, and all such crimes as originated in violation of the laws of marriage. 'Orphans and widows, the stranger and the poor, the pilgrim and the leper,' who were all termed 'persons in distress,' came within their peculiar jurisdiction; and it was their office to provide for the execution of wills, in which the testator frequently left money for pious uses. The whole body of crusaders, including those who had merely taken the vow, were liable to this spiritual tribunal only. It is said that during the first ten years of Henry's reign, more than one hundred acts of homicide were committed, the perpetrators of which, owing to the spiritual court, escaped the punishment of death. The Church could always absolve from her own censures; and confinement in a monastery, sometimes for a short period, was the usual sentence. Several instances are also mentioned of heinous outrages which thus remained all but unpunished.¹ The rivalry of the two courts of judicature had reached open hostility, increased probably by the desire of participating in the fees and forfeitures, at the time when the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the year 1161, left the highest place in the Church of England at the king's disposal. After the see had been vacant for a year, Henry resolved to bestow it upon his military chancellor. In case a conflict should ensue between the crown and the tiara, where could he find an archbishop more likely to promote his interests? The king's

¹ Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 17-20. Lingard, ii. 213. The higher dignitaries of the Church were, many of them, men of learning and good repute, but among the lower clergy the worst crimes were committed almost with impunity. Those who claimed the protection of the Church were the most lawless class in the community. —Dr. Hook's 'Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury,' ii. 385.

design to equalise the law over the clergy and laity was already well known to Becket, who had assisted in enforcing the war tax on the lands of the clergy, and had maintained the royal cause in the court of law against the Bishop of Chichester.¹ Becket had not sought this promotion; it is even said that he warned the king that if he became an archbishop he could no longer be a courtier. The monks of Canterbury unanimously approved of the appointment, and all the principal nobility attended his consecration in order to gratify the king.

But Becket immediately appeared in a new character. He put away his rich attire and assumed the plain gown of a monk; he stripped his house of costly furniture, no longer associated with nobles, and resigned the office of chancellor. He soon manifested his determination to maintain every pretension of the Church. Claiming a long disputed right of nominating to benefices within his see, he placed a priest in the Church of Eynsford, thus trespassing on what one of the king's tenants-in-chief, named William, considered as his property. William expelled the priest, and the archbishop consequently excommunicated William for violence towards one of his clergy. The indignation of Henry was roused; the Conqueror had forbidden excommunication to be issued against any of his subjects except by his consent; the person thus injured was entitled by his rank to appear at the council or at court, and it was considered highly improper for a sovereign to be brought into communication with any excommunicated person. Henry required the archbishop to retract the excommunication; Becket yielded, but with an ill grace. 'From this day,' said Henry, 'all friendship is over between that man and me.'² Soon afterwards the royal justiciaries ventured to summon a priest before their court against whom murder and other crimes were alleged. The archbishop, as the ecclesiastical superior, declared the impeachment illegal, and transferred the accused to an ecclesiastical court, where he was sentenced to lose his preferment, to be publicly flogged, and to be suspended from the ministry of religion for two years. This affair awakened great animosity between the two parties. It was granted that justice had been administered, but the king's judges had been set aside. The bishops made common cause with the primate; the nobles took the side of the judges and the king.

Henry saw that some legislative change was necessary, and

¹ Dr. Hook, iii. 372-82.

² Thierry, ii. 268. The references are to the notes in Eadmer, pp. 60 and 160. and Stephanides, p. 28.

having assembled the oarons and prelates in council at Westminster, required their assent that any clergyman who had been degraded for a public crime by a spiritual judge should be delivered over to the authority of the ordinary court. The bishops objected that this would bring their order into a lower position than it held in any other Christian country, and that no person ought to be twice brought to trial for the same offence. The king asked if they would promise to observe the ancient customs of the realm. The archbishop replied in the affirmative, 'saving his order.' The question was thought too vague; but the reply, in which all the bishops, save one, concurred, was felt by the king to be a denial, and roused his anger in a high degree. The next morning the archbishop was required to give up the castle of Berkhamstead, and those estates which he had received in gift from the king.

Henry now undertook the arduous work of withstanding ecclesiastical tyranny, and determined that no separate power like that of the Pope and his legates should exempt any portion of his subjects from the judgment of the law.¹ He obtained the promise of the Archbishop of York and of some other prelates that they would not oppose his designs, and real or pretended letters were promulgated, in which the Pope desired the bishops to accept and obey all the laws of England, whatever they might be.

Becket, left alone in opposition to the king, was constrained to submit. He went to the king's palace at Woodstock, and promised as the other bishops had done, that he would obey all the laws and customs. The king received him graciously, and in order that such an important stipulation might be solemnly enacted, summoned a great council to meet at the village of Clarendon, near Salisbury, where there was a royal palace.

The assembly, which accordingly met in the beginning of the year 1164, consisted of all the dignitaries of Church and State under the presidency of the Bishop of Oxford, one of the royal chaplains. All present inclined to agree to the king's requirements, when Becket, alarmed, it is said, by Henry's threatening manner, again ventured to insist on the obnoxious clause concerning his 'order,' expressing repentance for having previously yielded a point which he considered essential. The council was immediately the scene of great agitation. When

¹ See Hallam, ii. 21. The conditions which Henry now sought to establish were not new to Becket, who had assisted in his counsels.

the primate insisted so resolutely on this condition, it became too plain that he was determined to frustrate the king's design. It was the first great conflict waged in England between the supremacy of the king, supported by the law of the land, and the Church in connection with Rome, claiming for all its clergy special immunity.

The bishops implored the primate to yield to the royal will; the barons menaced him in case he should persist. While two Knights-Templars were entreating him to pay due respect to the king, men were seen in an adjoining room buckling on their armour as if for battle. Fearful, probably, of impending bloodshed, the archbishop again yielded, gave his word to observe 'the customs according to the mode of the king's ancestors,' and besought the king to inform him what those 'customs' had been.

It was far more easy to make known the king's present intentions than to describe the usages of past times.

A sovereign of the Norman line could scarcely refer to the period before the Conquest, when the bishop and earl sat together in the county-court, and when, as it appears, 'ecclesiastical matters were decided loosely, rather by the common law than according to the canons.'¹

The Anglo-Saxon Church had enjoyed 'a sort of barbarous immunity from the strict discipline which the Church of Rome exercised on the continent of Europe, but up to this time the judges in the king's court had been usually ecclesiastics.

The celebrated 'Constitutions of Clarendon' were laid next day before the council by the justiciaries. Three copies were made, all being signed by the king, the bishops, and the thirty-seven barons present. When required to affix his *seal*, Becket again shrank from further ratification of an edict so abhorrent to his principles. 'After what had passed,' says Lingard, 'it was a trifle neither worth the asking nor the refusing.'² He yielded, however, and letters were despatched to all the judges in England requiring them to submit to those decrees. By these 'Constitutions' it was enacted, first, that the custody of every vacant bishopric, or abbey of royal foundation, should rest with the king, and that the new incumbent should be chosen by the principal clergy, summoned by the king's writ, and be approved by the king, the same form of procedure by which Becket had been made Archbishop of Canterbury. By other articles it was provided that in almost every suit, civil or criminal, in which either party was a clergyman, the proceed-

¹ Hallam, ii. 21, note.

² Lingard, ii. 216.

ings should commence before the king's justices, who should determine the proper court for the trial; that, if held in the spiritual court, a civil officer should be present to report the proceedings, and that the defendant, if convicted on a criminal charge, should not be allowed any privilege of his order, styled 'Benefit of Clergy.' This clause destroyed the power of the spiritual courts appointed in the time of William the Conqueror. Other constitutions prohibited any sentence of excommunication from being passed on a tenant-in-chief, or officer of the king, without the royal sanction, and forbade the higher clergy to cross the sea without the king's permission, in order to obviate complaints to the Pope against the sovereign. Both these last prohibitions had been enforced by William the Conqueror.

In cases of appeal to the archbishop, should he fail to do justice, the cause was to be carried before the king. It was Henry's aim that both the clergy and the barons should regard the sovereign as their feudal superior.

To check the introduction of low-born persons into the Church, bishops were forbidden to admit the sons of villeins to holy orders, unless by the license of their respective lords.

The archbishop returned to Canterbury in great dejection. He repented bitterly of the consent which he had given, although by his previous opposition he had incurred the king's utmost displeasure. Both appealed to the Pope, Alexander III., who had succeeded to the English Adrian, and on whose gratitude Henry considered that he had some claim.¹ The Pope naturally inclined to the side of the zealous defender of Church interests, but Henry was urged to persevere in what had now become a personal dispute. The archbishop was summoned in October to appear before the king and a great council at Northampton, where he was fined in the amount of £500 on the charge of having shown contempt of the king in his judicial capacity. A further claim for £300 was made for the rents which he had received as Warden of Eye and Berkhamstead, and Becket coolly promised to refund it; but when at subsequent meetings further demands were made, evidently with the intention of ruining him utterly, Becket stood aghast, and desired a conference with his brother bishops. By them, with only one exception, he was recommended to resign his office. Hesitation and indisposition confined him for two days to his chamber, but he rallied his spirit and resolved to uphold to the

¹ There was at this time another competitor for the highest office in the Church.
—See Lingard, ii. 203.

utmost the dignity of his office. On October 18, after celebrating mass, he went to court in his pontifical robes, carrying in his hand the episcopal cross. On his entrance, the king and the barons withdrew to another room, and for a time Becket was left alone with his clerks in the spacious hall. Some of the bishops now began to dread the effects of the king's anger. The Bishop of Exeter threw himself at Becket's feet, entreating him to submit.

The Bishop of Chichester next addressed him in the name of the rest of the body. 'You were,' said he, 'our primate, but, by opposing the royal customs, you have broken your oath of fealty to the king. A perjured archbishop has no right to our obedience. We appeal to the Pope, and summon you to answer us before him.' 'I hear,' was Becket's only reply. At length the door opened, and the Earl of Leicester, at the head of the barons, bade the archbishop hear the sentence which had been passed upon him.

'My sentence!' exclaimed the archbishop: 'son and earl, first hear me. You know with what fidelity I served the king, how reluctantly I accepted my present office, and that I was declared by him free from all secular claims. For what took place before my consecration I ought not, nor will I answer. Know, moreover, that you are my children in God. Neither law nor reason allows you to judge your father. I, therefore, decline your tribunal, and refer my quarrel to the Pope's decision. To him I appeal, and I shall now depart under the protection of the Catholic Church.'

As Becket crossed the hall some of the courtiers pelted him with the straw which lay on the floor. One called him a traitor. Becket's military spirit fired: 'Were it not that my order forbids me, that coward should repent of his insolence.' But outside the hall Becket received those demonstrations of sympathy and respect which in every age are bestowed on intrepidity unjustly oppressed, and was conducted to his lodgings by a multitude of people. He besought the king's permission to leave the country, and, without obtaining an answer, withdrew from the town in the dusk of the evening. His life was thought to be in great danger from the fury of the king's party. After many perils, he succeeded in landing at Gravelines, in Flanders, was well received by the King of France, repaired to Sens, where the Pope then kept his court, and offered to resign his dignity, but this the Pope desired him to retain. The Pope pronounced that ten of the Articles of Clarendon were usurpations of the rights of the Church, and

proceeded to utter a solemn censure on their promoters. He advised Becket to retire for the present to the obscurity of monastic life, and placed him in the Abbey of Pontigny, on the borders of Burgundy, where, again adopting the simple dress of a monk, he submitted to the regular monastic discipline.¹ Meantime Becket's haughty defiance and flight had still further excited Henry's anger. He confiscated the archbishop's estates, ordered his name to be erased from the Liturgy, and seized on the property of every clergyman who was known to take his part. The task of proscription was entrusted to Renulf de Broc, Becket's inveterate enemy, by whom all the archbishop's relations, friends, and servants, amounting to four hundred persons, were banished from England. By this mean and cruel act of vengeance Henry hoped to humble his antagonist, and possibly to induce him to resign his archbishopric.² But the king did not yet know the high spirit of his adversary. As day after day disconsolate exiles arrived at Pontigny, Becket prepared to excommunicate Henry, and to place England under an interdict. He received a letter from the Pope desiring him to refrain until Easter, at which time he should be appointed papal legate over all England. Henry was in Normandy when the archbishop, at Whitsuntide, 1166, abruptly left Pontigny without consulting his friends, and, after visiting some holy shrines, proceeded to Vezelay, on the borders of Burgundy, where, in presence of a large congregation in the cathedral, he pronounced, with all the solemnity of the Catholic ritual, the dreaded sentence of excommunication upon the justiciaries and others who had aided the king in publishing the Constitutions of Clarendon, and on all who held the revenues of Canterbury, or profited by the forfeitures inflicted on his adherents. He is said to have been restrained from including the king himself by a rumour of Henry's severe illness.

Even Becket's own clerks were astonished at his daring. The indignation of Henry at this act of defiance was excessive. The first steps by which he tried to parry the blow were to send a letter of expostulation to the Pope, and to warn the Kentish clergy not to heed the sentences of excommunication, should they arrive. To prevent the receipt of such letters, orders were

¹ It is said by some writers that the Pope, overawed by Henry, declined an interview with Becket, although he refused to receive his resignation of his see.—See Michelet's '*History of France*,' iii. 102.

² Lingard enlarges on the great cruelty shown by the king in this banishment of all connected with the archbishop, including women and children, and considers that Becket was thus worked upon to wield the thunders of the Church.—Vol. ii. 230.

given that every passenger from the Continent should be searched, and all suspected papers seized, the most severe punishments being threatened against any person who might bring over these spiritual weapons. Henry was aware that, once under the ban of the Church, it was too probable that disaffection would break out in his continental dominions, and be eagerly encouraged by his more politic rival, the King of France.

He remained in France for some years, exerting all his policy to withstand the hostile influence of the exiled, but still powerful, archbishop, while Becket continued firm in his determination that the ecclesiastical power should triumph over the royal will. Henry authorised his bishops to appeal from Becket's judgment to that of the more compromising Pope, by whose favour the execution of the dreaded interdict was suspended. During Henry's long absence in Normandy there had been great oppression perpetrated in England.

On the king's return in 1170, he sent commissioners to convene the principal inhabitants of every county, in order to detect abuses of administration. To follow up this salutary course, a great council was held in London, at which the bishops, earls, and other persons in office attended, 'greatly appalled,' it is said, 'each fearing the consequences, and unable to anticipate the intentions of the sovereign.'¹ To the surprise of this assembly, Henry caused his eldest son, Prince Henry, to be consecrated and crowned as his associate in the sovereignty, alleging that from the extent of his dominions he required the assistance of a colleague, and that he wished to see his son exalted to equal dignity with himself. The prince was accordingly consecrated in Westminster Abbey by the Archbishop of York, and the king himself waited on his son at the feast which followed. William, King of Scotland, and a number of English barons and tenants of the crown, did homage and swore fealty to the young king. But the Archbishop of Canterbury in his exile could not brook the delegation to another of that part in the ceremonial which belonged to him by right. He had obtained from the Pope a letter placing under the ban of the Church those who might usurp his especial privilege, and it was in vain that his enemies strove to silence apprehensions by exhibiting a pretended letter from the Pope allowing the Archbishop of York to act in his place.² Becket had become extremely impatient of his seven years'

¹ Palgrave's 'Rise of the English Commonwealth,' p. 294.

² Lingard states that this was a forgery; Lord Lyttelton believed it to be genuine, and other writers have relied on his account.—Lingard, ii. 234, note.

exile; and his letters had so worked upon the Pope's mind that the latter entrusted him with decrees suspending the rival archbishop and all who had taken part in the coronation of Prince Henry. Alexander even threatened the king with the censures of the Church in case he should not speedily restore Becket to his rights. And these threats were no vain words. It is not now easy to realise the awful consequences of an interdict. During that term of punishment, which the Roman Catholic Church occasionally inflicted on the entire kingdom of a disobedient sovereign, 'the churches were closed, the bells silent, the dead remained unburied, no rite of religion was performed but those of baptism and extreme unction.' The dread of this awful measure deterred princes who felt their weakness from entering into a contest with those who wielded such power in the present world, such threats concerning the future. It even brought the most resolute to humble themselves before the chair of St. Peter. Henry felt the necessity of taking some step to end so hazardous a conflict. He had already twice met the Archbishop of Canterbury without adjudging their difference; each was alike resolute and alike distrustful; he now agreed that they should meet for a third time near Freteval, on the borders of Touraine. As soon as Becket appeared, Henry, spurring forward his horse, advanced cap in hand to meet him, and entered with apparent frankness into conversation. When Becket complained of the intrusion of the Archbishop of York upon his proper office, Henry endeavoured to excuse it, alleging that Aldred of York had in like manner crowned William the Conqueror. He promised Becket redress for all his grievances, but evaded bestowing the 'kiss of peace,' the guarantee of reconciliation, observing by the way, 'We shall meet again shortly in England, and then we will embrace.' Before they parted, Becket bent his knee respectfully to the king, and Henry returned the compliment with unexpected courtesy, by holding the stirrup himself for the archbishop to mount his horse. The king then wrote to his eldest son that he had made peace with Thomas of Canterbury, and that he desired that all the archbishop's possessions should be returned to him.

Some months elapsed before further progress was made towards restitution; there were many in England whose interest it was that Becket's exile should be perpetual. After another interview, in which the king and the archbishop indulged in mutual reproaches, Becket borrowed three hundred livres for

¹ Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' i. 529.

the expenses of his voyage, which Henry had previously promised to defray, and reached the port of Wissant, near Calais. It was the month of November, when it was often dangerous to cross the Channel, and the primate delayed his embarkation. While walking with his friends on the shore they were met by a stranger, who informed them that danger was not confined to the stormy waves; that armed men who might offer violence lurked on the opposite shore. Becket declared that he did not fear such danger, and that he was weary of waiting. He embarked, but so far availed himself of the friendly caution as to enter Sandwich, less frequented than Dover and nearer to Canterbury. The news of his return to England quickly spread, and the Earl of Kent, accompanied by the two knights De Broc, Becket's declared enemies, was already in motion. It had become known that the archbishop was the bearer of letters excommunicating, or at least suspending, the three bishops who officiated at the late coronation, and these prelates had sent Renulf de Broc to the coast with a party of soldiers to intercept the archbishop, and to seize these obnoxious papers. Thereupon Becket resolved to send off the letters, although previously he had wisely determined to suppress them, and they were publicly delivered to the bishops in the presence of their attendants. This precipitate measure was probably the occasion of the catastrophe which followed.¹ The bishops made loud complaints to the young king of Becket's love of power and thirst for revenge, and then hastened to Normandy to pour their apprehensions into Henry's too sensitive ear. When Becket proposed to visit Woodstock, he was desired not to leave his own diocese. This restriction, besides other acts of molestation, appeared to indicate impending evil. On Christmas Day the archbishop preached with great animation, and at the conclusion of his sermon declared that he would yet avenge the wrongs of his Church by the excommunication of his principal enemies, Renulf and Robert de Broc. When the king was informed by those who repaired to him in Normandy that the archbishop had returned armed with the dreaded sentences of excommunication, he was exasperated to the highest degree. 'If then,' he exclaimed, 'all those who were concerned in the coronation of my son are excommunicated, I must be so also.' 'Sire,' continued the bishops, 'this is not all: this haughty man will set your kingdom in a blaze; he gathers together a great multitude, and is trying to gain possession of your

¹ Lingard, ii. 247.

fortresses.' Henry's anger now exceeded all bounds. 'What,' cried he, 'can a man who once ate my bread, who was once little better than a beggar, insult his king thus; and will not one of my dastard followers deliver me from this vile priest!' Fatal words, which were too literally responded to by four Norman knights! On that same Christmas Day, when the archbishop in Canterbury Cathedral inveighed with mournful solemnity against his foes as the enemies of the Church, and while Henry was preparing with a council of Norman barons to send commissioners to England to arrest him on a charge of treason, these men were riding fast to execute their fatal design.¹

On the fifth day after Christmas they entered Canterbury, accompanied by a troop of soldiers, collected together by the way. With twelve followers they went to the residence of the archbishop, stated that they bore a message from the king, and immediately desired him to absolve the prelates whom he had excommunicated.

Becket replied that the case of the Archbishop of York was reserved for the judgment of the Pope, and reminded his accusers that three of them had in former days voluntarily sworn fealty to him.

When the knights had withdrawn, the attendants expressed their fears, but Becket retained his habitual courage. At this moment the voices of the monks were heard singing vespers in the choir, and the archbishop was induced to enter the cathedral, which seemed to his friends a place of greater safety than his palace. They would have closed the gates behind him, but he ordered them to be left open, saying that the temple of God should be open to all. He had passed the north transept, and was ascending the steps of the choir, when the knights and their twelve companions, all in complete armour, burst into the cathedral. It was almost dark, and Becket might have concealed himself in the crypt, but he turned to meet the intruders, followed by his cross-bearer, Edward Grim, the only one of his attendants who stood his ground. To the question, 'Where is the traitor?' no reply was made. When Fitzurse asked, 'Where is the archbishop?' Becket made answer, 'Here I am, the archbishop, but no traitor. Reginald, I have granted thee many favours; what is thy object now? If you seek my life, I desire you not to touch one of my people.' He was desired to absolve the bishops. 'Till they offer satisfaction, I will not.' 'Then die,' exclaimed the knight, aiming a blow which wounded the archbishop. Feeling

¹ Thierry.

himself overpowered, Becket forbade Grim to defend him, and received the fatal blows with dignified composure.¹

Thus, at the age of fifty-three, died this extraordinary man; and thus, by rendering Becket a martyr, the greatest possible injury was done to the king's cause. It has been said that Archbishop Becket was the first person of Saxon lineage who received promotion from a Norman sovereign, and to this circumstance some have ascribed his popularity. But this appears to be altogether erroneous. It was by his character, not his lineage, that Thomas Becket was during his life the popular favourite, and the atrocious crime which caused his death raised that feeling to idolatry.²

Henry was still in Normandy, occupied in feasting and pleasure, when he received the news of the tragical end of his great adversary. He felt at once all the insecurity and dishonour of his position. Better far had it been to continue to bear all the rancour of the living Becket than to be implicated in the murder of a reputed martyr! For three days the king remained in his chamber alone. His first act was to send an embassy to Rome, to pacify the Pope by pleading his ignorance of the plot against the archbishop's life, and expressing readiness to submit to the Pope's decision. Alexander declared the murderers excommunicated, and also all who protected them. Spiritual courts held jurisdiction over the murderers of clergy, and the perpetrators of what was thought the most heinous crime since the Crucifixion could not be brought before a secular court of justice.³ By the Pope's desire the murderers undertook a pilgrimage to Palestine, where, according to some accounts, they died; but there is reason to believe that in less than two years after the assassination they were again well received in England.⁴

Henry, returning to England in the following August, determined to prosecute his long suspended design of subjugating Ireland, where continual wars among the petty princes had hitherto greatly retarded civilisation. According to tradition there had been famous schools in Ireland before the Norman Conquest, but in the 12th century the greater number of the inhabitants still continued in wild disorder. In the year 1167

¹ The exact spot in Canterbury Cathedral where the archbishop was slain has been the subject of discussion. According to recent statements, Becket at first used his utmost strength in resisting his assailants.—See 'Quarterly Review,' Sept., 1853. The accounts of the death of Becket differ in many ways.

² Although his father had become a London citizen, he was a native of Rouen.—Milman's 'Latin Christianity,' iii. 445.

³ Lingard, ii. 266.

⁴ 'Quarterly Review,' No. 186. Henry gave them places of trust, and Fitzurse, Tracy, and De Broc were the founders of noble families.

Dermot, King of Leinster, who had been expelled, obtained the assistance of Richard Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, and of other military adventurers from Wales, and subdued great part of Ireland. This success encouraged Henry to complete the unfulfilled designs of the Conqueror and of Henry I., and accompanied by Strongbow and a large military force he landed at Waterford. A wooden palace had been erected at Dublin for his reception. The chieftains who were induced to visit his court and do homage were hospitably entertained, and four out of the five provinces acknowledged his sovereignty according to the terms of feudal obligation. But Henry acquired no real power beyond the reach of his garrisons, and those Irish princes who acknowledged him felt only that they had promised to transfer to a distant sovereign the allegiance previously rendered to the King of Connaught.¹ But, whilst thus holding his court in Ireland, Henry's mind was brooding on concerns far more personal to himself.

During the five months of his stay, from October until the end of March, it is said that no vessel from England or from the English territories on the continent arrived on the Irish coast. It is believed that Henry's prudence forbade communication, for he constantly apprehended a fatal blow from the Holy See. At length a summons came, we are not informed of its nature; but, sailing instantly for England, Henry crossed the Channel as expeditiously as possible on his return to Normandy. The impetuosity of his nature made him so rapid in his movements that the King of France, who had believed him to be in Dublin, exclaimed, 'The King of England flies as rapidly as a bird. One moment transports him from Ireland to England; another from England to France.' Henry's object was to meet the Pope's legates, and to obtain absolution.² Pardon was only to be granted after an act of humiliation. The cathedral of Avranches occupied one of the finest situations in Europe, overlooking the wide bay in the centre of which stands St. Michael's Rock. There, in the presence of the legates, bishops, barons, and assembled people, Henry solemnly made oath that he was innocent, both in word and deed, of the murder of the archbishop.

But, as he could not deny that his hasty and passionate exclamations had prompted the assassins, he consented to maintain for twelve months two hundred knights for the defence of the Holy Land, to serve in the crusade in person,

¹ Lingard, ii. 269. The princes of Ulster alone obstinately asserted their independence, and would neither visit the residence of the King of England nor own his authority.

² Lingard, ii. 264.

should the Pope require him to do so, to restore the lands and possessions of the friends of the archbishop, and finally to abolish any customs hostile to the liberties of the clergy which might have been introduced during his reign. On these conditions the legates granted absolution. On the single granite pillar of this cathedral which now remains, an inscription is said to be still legible, testifying to the absolution which was granted to Henry II., King of England and Duke of Normandy, on his knees, by the papal legate, May 22, 1172.

But serious troubles still hung over Henry's path; he had offended the King of France, because, at the coronation of Prince Henry, the wife of the young king, daughter of Louis, was not allowed her part in the ceremonial. The ceremony was now repeated, in order to atone for the omission; but the young Henry further stipulated that his father should resign in his favour either his royal or his ducal crown. The rebellious designs of the prince were shared by his two brothers, Richard and Geoffrey, and encouraged by Queen Eleanor. At Easter, 1173, Louis and the barons of France solemnly bound themselves to assist the younger Henry to obtain possession of England, and the Earl of Flanders and William, King of Scotland, entered into the league, the young king being ready to recompense their services by assigning to the one the earldom of Kent, to the other the county of Northumberland. The king, while he remained in Normandy, found himself day by day deserted by his most confidential adherents. He besought the Pope in this extremity to protect the kingdom of England, 'the fief of the Holy See and the patrimony of St. Peter,' from the unnatural attempts of his deluded children.¹ The peril was indeed great. The Earl of Leicester had joined the confederates, and, landing in England with a body of mercenaries from Flanders, was joyfully received by Hugh Bigod, the Earl of Norfolk. The King of Scotland broke over the border, burned Berwick, and pillaged Lothian, which at that time was English ground. In spite of the exertions of Richard de Lucy, the justiciary, who defeated Leicester, the safety of the kingdom was so far threatened that the Bishop of Winchester hastened to Normandy to urge Henry's immediate return.

Henry came, but not in armour at the head of his forces; he came to disarm the wrath of Heaven by another and still more complete act of humiliation. In the preceding year the name of Thomas Becket had been added by the Pope to the catalogue

¹ Lingard, ii. 270.

of saints, and Europe rang with the report of miracles wrought at his shrine. On July 10, when Henry landed at Southampton, he began his pilgrimage to Canterbury without waiting for rest. He rode through the night, took no refreshment but bread and water, and when first he could behold the towers of the cathedral, he dismounted, put on the garb of a penitent, and proceeded barefoot into the city. The people observed when he passed through the gateway that his feet were bleeding: he descended into the crypt and threw himself at the foot of the archbishop's tomb, while the Bishop of London addressed the spectators from the pulpit, conjuring them to believe their sovereign's innocence of the murder, and his deep repentance for the passionate utterances for which he was now submitting to public penance. At the conclusion of this address, the king entered the chapter house, where a number of ecclesiastics had assembled. The royal penitent fell on his knees before them, and each of the clergy in turn inflicted three or four stripes with a knotted cord on his bare shoulders. Henry then returned to the crypt, spent the night in prayer, and next morning, after attending mass, mounted his horse and rode to London; but the want of nourishment, added to fatigue and anguish of mind, threw him into a fever which confined him for a few days to his chamber.¹ On the fifth night of the king's illness a messenger arrived at the palace bearing the important intelligence that the Scots were routed, and their king and a numerous train of his followers taken prisoners. This happy event, as Henry observed with satisfaction, had occurred on the very morning on which he rose from penance at the shrine of St. Thomas. He hastened to join his army in the north, but found that his enemies had disappeared. The Earl of Norfolk and the Bishop of Durham, who had joined in the revolt, surrendered their castles and obtained pardon. Having restored order in England, Henry set sail for Normandy to relieve Rouen, which had been long besieged by the King of France and the Earl of Flanders, abettors of the young Henry in his disaffection. The King of England's arrival saved Rouen and terminated the war. The three rebellious princes promised due obedience to their father, the conquests on both sides were restored, and all the captives released. The most important of the king's prisoners, the King of Scotland, had been brought by Henry to Normandy, and confined in the castle of Falaise. Henry summoned a deputation of Scottish prelates and barons,

¹ 'So deep a humiliation of so great a prince,' says Dr. Stanley, 'was unparalleled in the memory of Englishmen.'—'Memorials of Canterbury,' p. 92.

with whom it was agreed that William should henceforth do homage to Henry, these representatives of the Scottish nobility confirming the engagement, and standing sureties for their king's fidelity.¹ The King of Scotland was set at liberty, and the next year the treaty was solemnly ratified at York.

Freed from the anxiety of war, Henry at length paid attention to the care of his dominions and the improvement of jurisprudence.

The modes of trial were various. The ancient custom of appealing to 'the judgment of God' was still pursued, and to the ordeals of fire and water, which were used by the Saxons, the Normans had added wager of battle. It frequently happened that a prisoner was brought to trial through common report of his guilt, or at the prosecution of one person, when it was the duty of the judges to endeavour to find out the truth of the charge. In case of murder, the prosecutor, who was in some way allied to the deceased, offered to substantiate his accusations by doing battle in a place appointed by the court, and if the defendant was unwilling to fight, or proved unable to continue the conflict, he was either immediately hanged, condemned to forfeit his property, or sometimes to lose his limbs. If he slew the prosecutor, or forced him to cry out 'Craven,' or protracted the fight till night, he was acquitted, and the prosecutor was deprived of all the privileges of a free-man.²

A curious example of this practice has been preserved. Henry, Earl of Essex, the hereditary grand standard-bearer, who accompanied the king in an incursion into Wales in the year 1157, was surprised by a sudden attack, and took to flight. Henry excused his cowardice, and Essex was allowed to redeem his character in the French war; but six years afterwards Robert de Montfort, owing to a private quarrel, charged Essex publicly with this act as treason, and offered to prove it against him in mortal combat. The king was compelled to consent to the trial at arms, and the duel took place in 1163 in a river-island near Reading, in the presence of a large assembly, and ended in the defeat and, publicly considered, the death of Essex, who was borne to the Abbey of Reading, where in time he regained his

¹ By what was called the Treaty of Falaise, absolute homage was promised by the King of Scotland, as complete as that paid by any vassals in England, this condition to be, of course, hereditary. But twenty-five years later, Richard Cœur de Lion restored the independence of the Scottish kingdom for ten thousand marks as the price of the discharge.—Burton, ii. 68-71.

² Lingard, ii. 291.

health, but not his liberty. According to law he should have been put to death; Henry confiscated his property, and for the rest of his life Essex remained a monk in Reading Abbey.¹

An instance on record of a conviction by the water-ordeal shows the disorderly state of London at this period. Many young men, sons of wealthy citizens, were accustomed to assemble after sunset, and to make pastime of terrifying the peaceable inhabitants. One evening, some of these entered the house of a citizen who was prepared to repel an assault; one of the assailants lost a hand in the fray which ensued, and was taken prisoner. Probably either from malice, or to obtain his own pardon, the prisoner accused John Senex, a rich and respectable citizen, of participation in the crime. Senex denied the charge, and appealed to the judgment of God. He was convicted according to the water-ordeal, and the chief-justiciary ordered him to be hanged. The sentence remained unexecuted for three years, when, as unhappily Earl Ferrers had been slain in a like fray, and the murderers were not discovered, Henry judged an example of severity needful as a warning, and ordered the immediate execution of Senex, although five hundred marks were offered for his ransom.²

It was an important improvement when what was termed 'Trial by Grand Assize' was adopted instead of the doubtful and dangerous ordeal. According to this, twelve witnesses, or compurgators, were summoned from the neighbourhood in which the crime was committed, to give as far as possible impartial testimony concerning the offender. Although this was a usage sometimes practised by the Anglo-Saxons, and which had once prevailed in Normandy, it was not generally adopted until this reign, and appears to have been at first granted as a favour, or on the payment of a sum of money.³ According to the law, neither the friends, enemies, or near relations of an accused person could appear as witnesses. This mode of trial by inquest or jury was the form from which our present 'trial by the country' takes its origin, but it appears that more than two centuries passed after this time before juries obtained the character which they have at present; a far longer time elapsed before they were allowed to state their verdict fearlessly, without personal danger. When the great council assembled at Northampton in the year 1176, Henry introduced what may be termed

¹ Palgrave's 'Proofs and Illustrations,' p. xxiii., note; Foss's 'Lives of the Judges,' i. 235; Lingard, ii. 226, note.

² Lingard, ii. 289; and Hallam, ii. 121, note.

³ Palgrave's 'Progress of the Commonwealth,' p. 265.

the greatest measure of his reign, the appointment of 'itinerant, or perambulatory, judges.' The country was divided into six districts, nearly agreeing in extent with the judges' circuits at present, to each of which three judges were annually assigned. By this arrangement justice was more generally dispensed, for the provincial courts were liable to partiality, and the great difficulty of travelling must have prevented all but the wealthy from attending the king's court. It may be true that the interest of the crown was as much concerned in this proceeding as the benefit of the people, for part of the duty of the judges was to levy fines, to receive the oath of fealty to the king from men of all conditions, and to make a general survey; but a contemporary writer states that by 'doing full justice to those who thought themselves injured, they prevented the poor people's trouble and expense.'¹ Henry endeavoured to repress the venality of the judges, and removed those who were accused of exacting presents. It was a proof that Henry's fame in the administration of justice was widely spread, that Alphonso, King of Castile, and his uncle of Navarre, sent deputies to plead in a cause in the Court of Westminster, binding themselves under a penalty to submit to the King of England's decision; and this also shows that the humiliation of the penance had not materially impaired Henry's reputation. Nor were the Constitutions of Clarendon forgotten. For a time they had been in part at least suspended; Henry had promised to abolish any which might be proved wrong in principle; but they were renewed at the council of Northampton, and it was likewise conceded that the king might summon the clergy before temporal courts if they presumed to hunt in his parks and forests.²

In the year 1179 Louis of France came to England, 'where neither he nor any of his ancestors had ever yet been,' to offer prayer at the tomb of Becket. Henry met the king at Dover with every mark of respect, and the archbishop and the principal barons joined the solemn procession at Canterbury.³

Henry had promised to aid in the crusade if required by the Pope. The kingdom of Jerusalem, established by the crusaders, was exposed to the utmost peril on the death of the King of France. This sovereign had intended to join in an expedition of relief, and now Henry was appealed to as the head of the next crusade. Reluctant to undertake an enter-

¹ See Dr. Hook's 'Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury,' ii. 316.

² 'Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury,' ii. 520-36; also Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 22, note.

³ Roger of Wendover, ii. 43.

prise of such great peril, he summoned a feudal council in London, at which the King of Scots appeared at the head of the lieges, and asked their advice, whether it were better for him to govern his own dominions or to enlist for the rescue of Palestine. The answer being conformable to his expectation, Henry promised a large subsidy instead of personal aid. But Heraclius, patriarch of Jerusalem, the head of the embassy, upon this murmured, 'We seek a man and not money : almost every Christian land sendeth money, but no land a prince.' The dreaded event soon occurred. Jerusalem, after being held by Christians for ninety-six years, surrendered to Mahometans in September, 1187. Consternation spread through great part of Europe, and the Pope died, it is said, of a broken heart. Early in the next year Henry met Philip Augustus, the new sovereign of France, in Normandy, where, after listening to the eloquence of the Archbishop of Tyre, both kings and a great many nobles assumed the cross. Henry, in his old age, had no intention of undertaking personally the perilous adventure. He summoned a council on his return, to meet at Geddington, in Northamptonshire. On the plea of the new crusade, a heavy income tax, a tenth, was levied on all not willing to join in person, excommunication being threatened on those who gave false returns of their property. Those who took the cross would be absolved, they were assured, from all sins of which they repented. This is one of the first instances of what was termed 'plenary indulgence.' Crusaders were permitted to receive for their own use the payments made by their vassals, and the Jews by customary rigour were compelled to pay a fourth of their personal property.¹ The opportunity was taken for a missionary expedition into the interior of Wales, a district which had never yet been explored by either the Anglo-Saxons or their Norman successors. This, which was headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Ranulph de Glanville, the justiciary, had probably as much a political as a religious object. The missionaries were ignorant of the Welsh language, but they raised the banner of St. Thomas of Canterbury, for even in Wales Thomas à Becket was the popular idol. The war-song was taken from the Psalms of David, and the enthusiasm of the Welsh brought many recruits to the standard of the cross. Henry, by the Pope's permission, conferred the lordship of Ireland on John, his youngest son, to be held according to feudal usages, and the young prince arrived in Ireland with

¹ Lingard, ii. 297. Hook's 'Life of Archbishop Baldwin—Lives of Archbishops, ii. 559.

a large force to take possession. But his conduct was so reckless and disgraceful as to bring the whole English ascendancy into disrepute, and, after an inglorious misgovernment of nine months, John was recalled by his father.¹ On the continent the sons of the King of England were at war both with their father and with each other. It was in vain that King Henry, at personal risk, strove to reconcile their differences, and that the bishops of Normandy denounced the unnatural strife. But at length the young Henry became seriously ill, and, remorseful for his past conduct, implored his father to visit him. The king would have complied, but was dissuaded by his friends, who feared some evil design, and sent his son his ring as a token of forgiveness. The young Henry pressed it to his lips, expressed the utmost penitence, and according to the prevailing usage, in expiation of his sins, desired his attendants to place him on a bed of ashes, on which he expired. The next son, Geoffrey, shortly afterwards died, but Richard still remained at variance with his father. At the solicitation of the bishops, who sought to end the strife, the Kings of England and France met on a plain near Tours. Henry's bitter disappointment on finding the name of his youngest and favourite son John on the list of disaffected barons was too much for his enfeebled frame. Returning to Chinon, he sickened of fever, and expired on the seventh day, receiving the usual religious rites at the foot of the altar. The moment after his death the barons and bishops departed, while other attendants stripped the corpse of all that was valuable. He was buried with little pomp at the convent of Fontevraud, in Normandy, in the presence of his son and successor, Richard, and a few knights and bishops, July 6, 1189.

The description of Henry given by a contemporary writer, Peter de Blois, archdeacon of London, sets before us the picture of an active, impetuous, unpolished man; hasty in his actions, but not implacable or revengeful. 'He, every day,' says this writer, 'attends mass, councils, and other public business, and stands on his feet from morning till night. If need requires, he will in one day perform four or five regular days' journeys, and often defeat his enemies' plans by rapid and unexpected movements. When not fighting he is very fond of field sports, hawking and hunting, and tires out the strongest man. He does not, like other kings, be idle in his palace, but goes through his provinces examining into everybody's conduct, particularly that of the persons whom he has appointed judges.

¹ Lingard, ii. 263. This was in December, 1186.

If he once forms an attachment to a man, he seldom gives him up; if he has once taken a real aversion to a person, he seldom admits him afterwards to any familiarity. He has for ever in his hands bows and arrows, hunting-nets, or other weapons, except when he is at council or at his books; for as often as he can get breathing-time from his cares, he occupies himself with private reading, or, surrounded by a knot of clergymen, he endeavours to solve some hard question.¹ Peter declares that the coarseness of the king's hands showed his carelessness, for he never put on a glove except when hawking. Concerning Henry's irascible temper, he cautions his friend to be careful when to 'go into the presence, for he is a lamb when in good humour, but worse than a lion when seriously angry. It is no joke to incur the indignation of one in whose hands are honour and disgrace.'² Henry sometimes, however, evinced a placable temper. His anger had been great against Bertrand de Born, a patriotic poet of Aquitaine, who had excited the younger Henry to revolt. But when, soon after the prince's death, Bertrand was taken prisoner and brought into the royal presence, he so much excited Henry's sensibility by the regret with which he spoke of his son, that the king restored him both to liberty and to his castle, and gave him a sum of money.³ If the frequent mention of his violent passions, and his conduct towards the innocent adherents of Archbishop Becket, make us hesitate in ascribing to him 'remarkable clemency,' we may perhaps agree with the historian of the archbishops that he was a clear-headed, well-intentioned politician, a man of warm affections, and of generous impulses. He would have forgiven Becket after very great provocation, if Becket had not continually added fresh cause for anger.⁴

Of Henry's five sons, only two, Richard and John, survived him. His eldest daughter, Matilda, married Henry, surnamed 'the lion,' Duke of Saxony, and was the mother of the prince William, from whom our present royal family descends.

Besides the monastic orders, there were orders of laymen bound by religious vows. One of the principal of these was the society of the knights-templars, who, at their foundation especially, devoted their service to the defence of the Holy

¹ 'Quarterly Review,' lviii. 459.

² Thierry, iii. 59. Bertrand was so well known for the part he had taken in the civil war, that the poet Dante introduced him in the 'Inferno,' and makes him say, 'Know that I am Bertrand de Born, he who gave such bad counsels to the young king.'—Canto 28.

³ See Dr. Hook's 'Lives of the Archbishops,' ii. 366-476, note. Mr. Hallam calls Henry 'a prince of remarkable clemency.'—'Middle Ages,' ii. 101.

Sepulchre and to the protection of pilgrims to the temple on Mount Moriah. In the reign of Henry they took possession of buildings on the bank of the Thames, which retain the name of the Temple, although devoted to the use of lawyers for more than five hundred years. The round church, which attracts attention from its antiquity, was consecrated by Heraclius, and the brethren enjoyed spacious pleasure-grounds. For many years the New Temple, as it was called, was considered the safest place of deposit, and was used as a bank for moneys collected for the crusade.¹

¹ See Knight's 'London,' iii. 309.

CHAPTER X.

RICHARD I., SURNAMED CŒUR DE LION.

A.D. 1189-1199.

AFTER the death of his father, Richard was detained for a few weeks on the continent, and he delegated the authority of regent to his mother, Queen Eleanor, who proceeded through England, doing justice and proclaiming the new sovereign.

At her invitation the barons and prelates assembled at Winchester to receive their king, and on September 3 Richard was crowned at Westminster with great splendour. He had issued a proclamation, forbidding Jews to appear on the day of his coronation, fearing a tumult from the presence of that unpopular race; or, perhaps, the magical powers which the ignorance of the age ascribed to them. Some ventured notwithstanding to appear, relying that those who brought gifts and congratulations to their sovereign would not be excluded from his presence. The recent expulsion of the whole race from the neighbouring kingdom of France had induced this public exhibition of loyalty. A fray, however, arose, the Jews were driven off with insult, and the populace, catching up a rumour that the king desired their extermination, joined in a general attack. Richard's efforts to disperse the rioters were fruitless. Every Jew seen in the streets was murdered; every house known to belong to a Jew was set on fire. As a measure of repression, three offenders were selected for execution, whose offence, however, had been against Christian, not Jewish, property. The king plainly feared to disgust his subjects by severe measures in defence of a hated people. At this period the Jews were the principal European bankers. Industry had not, as yet, created riches; commerce had not, in

any great degree, promoted the circulation of money. The high interest of money in times when it was so scarce enriched the money-lender. Fourpence a week was the interest of £1 paid by a subject of Henry II., the £1 being the cost of a long litigation.¹ Eager for gain, although fearful of exhibiting their wealth, and scarcely able to enjoy its proceeds, many Jews suffered for the sake of gold with a fortitude worthy of martyrs in the noblest cause. The outrages committed at this time appear to have been principally excited by crusaders.² At York a conspiracy was organised by men whose real design was plunder, and who sought to square accounts by simply destroying the securities held by the Jews for repayment of their advances. Five hundred Jews, who had cast themselves for safety into the castle at York, were at length reduced to such despair as to bury or destroy their valuables, even to kill first their children and afterwards themselves, that they might not fall into the hands of their enemies. A cruel death was the fate of the few survivors.

The first acts of Richard after his accession were to extort money. He seized Stephen of Tours, the late king's treasurer, and cast him into a dungeon in chains, from which he did not escape till he had surrendered not only the royal property which he held, but also his own. But the inhabitants of some towns took advantage of the king's love of money to purchase their municipal rights.

Richard had devoted himself as a leader of the crusade, and to raise sufficient funds for this undertaking 'he set up everything for sale, lordships, castles, townships, woods, farms, offices,' says the old chronicler. He sold the earldom of Northumberland to the Bishop of Durham; for a considerable sum he restored two castles to the King of Scots, and relieved him besides from the feudal subordination which the late king had enforced.

Richard cared nothing for the honour of the crown, or for the welfare of his subjects; his favourite pursuit was military life, for which Palestine then offered the most brilliant field; he looked upon his dominions as a farm from which to supply the expense of the undertaking. The Kings of France had taken a leading part in encouraging the crusades, and Richard, before ascending the throne, had already determined to be one of the champions of the Cross. On July 1 the Kings

¹ Richard of Anesty borrowed half a mark (6s. 8d.) at three-halfpence a week interest, and kept it ten weeks.—Palgrave's 'Proofs and Illustrations,' xxvi.

² Lingard, ii. 313.

were kept daily in view of the army by military routine. Indeed the words 'The Holy Sepulchre' were sounded by voice of herald thrice daily throughout the camp as a reminder to the troops, to animate them constantly with the aim of the expedition.

Of Richard's prowess in the field of battle there is ample testimony, as well as of the unusual strength with which he wielded his weapons. A century after his death his name is said to have been used by Turkish knights when chiding their horses, and by mothers to terrify their children. Yet, according to report, Saladin said that Richard's strength lay more in his right arm than in his head. Attacks of fever and apprehensions with regard to England inclined Richard to enter on an armistice with the sultan for three years. Saladin required that the fortress of Ascalon should be destroyed, but promised Christian pilgrims free access to the Holy Sepulchre. Thus ended the third crusade. Richard, after sending his fleet to Sicily with his wife and sister, embarked on October 9 to return to his dominions. The navigation must have been very imperfect which caused a month to elapse before he reached the isle of Corfu.

Richard was aware that he had enemies who might obstruct his return. In Palestine rival claims had been advanced for the crown of Jerusalem by Guy of Lusignan and Conrad of Montferrat; and when Conrad was assassinated at Tyre, his relations, apparently without cause, attributed the deed to the King of England. He had also been informed that the King of France had joined his brother John in his treacherous designs, and that the Emperor Henry of Germany had been irritated by his treaty with Tancred. Hoping to escape the machinations of supposed enemies, Richard assumed the disguise of a pilgrim. A storm drove him upon the coast of Istria, between Aquileia and Venice. The first town which he reached was Goritz, the residence of Maynard, a nephew of the murdered Conrad. Richard sent a page to procure from Maynard a passport for Baldwin and Hugh, pilgrims returning from Jerusalem; but the ring sent as a gift was so valuable as at once to excite suspicion of the pilgrim's rank. Maynard, exclaiming that the ring was the present of a prince, returned a message by the page that his master might come in person; but Richard immediately bought horses and fled with precipitation. For three days and nights he pursued his way, not daring to enter a house or purchase provisions till he reached Esperg, near Vienna, about the middle of December, being then too weak to travel farther. The boy

who was sent to market tried to baffle inquiry by saying that his master was a rich merchant who would arrive in three days; but subsequently, under torture, he revealed the king's name and abode, and the house was surrounded by armed men. Richard drew his sword, declaring that he would only give himself up to the chieftain. The chief soon appeared, and proved to be Leopold, Duke of Austria, whom Richard had grievously offended in Palestine, the brother-in-law of that Isaac of Cyprus whom he had imprisoned. The duke now retaliated by committing the king to close confinement in a castle, where Richard's fetters were probably not of silver but of iron.

It was long before the king's imprisonment was known in England, where fierce factions had been contending since his departure. The direction of affairs had been entrusted to William de Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, chancellor, justiciary, and papal legate. Several earldoms had been given by Richard to his brother John, but no benefits secured his affection. John was calculating on the probability of his brother's death, and impatiently preparing to press his claim to the succession; while Richard was believed to favour the claim of the infant prince Arthur, son of Geoffrey, a deceased son of Henry. The exactions of Longchamp, and his arrogant display of what resembled royal parade, offended the nobles, and the general hatred which his conduct excited was greatly extending the influence of John. There was also a half-brother of Richard, named Geoffrey, Archbishop of York, who had fallen under the Pope's censure, and been prohibited from residing in England. He had ventured to return without permission, and when the chancellor, Longchamp, would have apprehended him on his arrival in Dover, took refuge in St. Martin's church. The sanctuary was respected for three days; on the fourth, Geoffrey was carried to Dover Castle; but when the Bishop of London interceded, and offered security for his good conduct, he was released and allowed to return to London. John, who had previously been at variance with Archbishop Geoffrey, now caught eagerly at the opportunity of uniting his efforts with the prelate's against Longchamp, and with this intention summoned the barons and bishops to Reading. Longchamp issued letters forbidding them to obey the summons of a prince known to be disloyal. The assembly was held; John and Geoffrey embraced, and papers were shown which were said to have arrived from Palestine and been signed by Richard, appointing

another council of regency, and giving Geoffrey permission to return to York. Another council, which was soon afterwards held in St. Paul's Churchyard, determined unanimously on the chancellor's deposition, alleging that Longchamp had so much exhausted the wealth of the community, that he and his satellites 'had not left a man his silver belt, a woman her necklace, or a nobleman his ring or money, or anything of value to a Jew,' and that in the royal treasury nothing would be found but keys and empty vessels.¹ The heralds proclaimed that it pleased Earl John, the king's brother, and all the bishops, earls, and barons of the kingdom, and the citizens of London, that the chancellor should be deposed. This is said to have been the first instance of the presence of the third estate at a meeting for the redress of grievances, although special privileges had long been allowed to the citizens of London. It was also, according to Hallam, 'the earliest example of that leading principle of our Constitution, the responsibility of Ministers to Parliament.'² Longchamp was permitted to retire to Canterbury on his promise to surrender nearly all the royal castles, and to leave two of his brothers as hostages. When he attempted to escape from Dover in the disguise of a female pedlar, he was recognised and derided by the people; but he was soon afterwards enabled to leave England, and was so fortunate during his exile as to discover the place in which his sovereign was imprisoned. Henry VI., Emperor of Germany, had purchased Richard of England from Duke Leopold for sixty thousand pounds, and had immured him in one of the castles of the Tyrol, in fetters, and closely watched day and night by armed guards. According to an interesting tradition, which long prevailed in Europe, but has been discredited by modern historians, Blondel, the king's favourite minstrel, went forth on a tour of inquiry, and was recompensed by at length hearing Richard's well-known voice singing an air to while away the dull hours in the castle of Tiernsteign. Blondel took up the strain from without, and continued the song, upon which the king recognised his minstrel's voice, and they were enabled to hold friendly communication. A ballad founded on this legend was produced in France so lately as 1784, and adapted to melody. It became popular, and from its peculiarly loyal feeling was played before Louis XVI. and his queen at the last great military *fête* given at Versailles.³ In whatever manner the first dis-

¹ Roger of Wendover, ii. 112.

² 'Middle Ages,' ii. 107; and Lord Campbell's 'Chancellors,' vol. i.

³ 'O Richard, O mon roi,' 1789.—See Carlyle's 'French Revolution.'

covery was made, the news of Richard's cruel imprisonment greatly excited his English subjects.

The bishops assembled at Oxford, and sent deputies to console their captive monarch, and Eleanor, the queen-mother, besought the Pope to intercede with the emperor on behalf of the zealous champion of the Cross. Prince John was, however, openly disloyal. He hastened to France, yielded some lands to Philip in order to become his liegeman, and collected troops for self-support. The King of France laid siege to Rouen; but the Earl of Essex, who had recently returned from Palestine, succeeded in exciting the citizens against the French, and compelled Philip to withdraw. After much solicitation, Longchamp was permitted to accompany the King of England to the Germanic Diet held at Hagenau, where, in the presence of bishops, dukes, and knights of the empire, the emperor accused Richard of acts of violence and treachery committed in Sicily and Corfu, and of participation in the murder of the Marquis of Montferrat. To repel the last charge, a letter was produced written by the sheik, or 'old man of the mountains,' acknowledging himself the instigator of that murder.¹ Richard's intrepid bearing, and the clearness with which he made his defence, produced a favourable impression on the assembly; the emperor ordered his chains to be struck off, and that he should be treated with respect, but fixed his ransom at a hundred thousand marks, intending to detain him in captivity until its payment. A strange ceremony then took place. In the presence of the assembled German princes and English envoys, Richard uncovered his head, and resigned his crown to the emperor, who restored it on the stipulation that it should be held as a feudal fief, with an annual payment of five thousand pounds. The influence of John and the King of France was still exerted to defer Richard's liberation, but the German princes represented to the emperor that further delay would be ungenerous; a part of the ransom was paid and hostages given for the rest, and in February, 1194, Richard descended the Rhine, and embarked at Antwerp to return to England. The great demands for the king's ransom occasioned much discontent, and blame was thrown upon the collectors. No distinction was made between clergy and laity, citizens or husbandmen, and the Abbot of St. Edmund's Bury had difficulty in preserving his famous shrine from spoliation.² Just before Richard's long-

¹ Lingard, ii. 340, note. Copies of this letter were sent to monks who were known to be writing the history of the time.

² 'Monastic Life in the Twelfth Century,' p. 28.

delayed return, Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, the chief justiciary, assembled the heads of the clergy at Westminster to threaten Earl John and his abettors with the censures of the Church, unless they desisted from their opposition to the government. The archbishop also took military command, gained Marlborough Castle for the king, and was about investing the castle of Nottingham, when Richard landed on March 13, and was received with great enthusiasm.¹

On March 30 Richard convened a great council at Nottingham, with the object of gaining supplies, and of inflicting punishment on his rebellious brother. Several persons were deprived of authority, their offices being sold to the highest bidder; and John and his principal adviser, the Bishop of Coventry, having failed to appear at the royal summons, were outlawed.

It was considered expedient, probably on account of the late feudal ceremonial in Germany, that Richard should be crowned a second time, and the Archbishop of Canterbury performed the ceremony on April 17 at Winchester. After being thus reinstated in authority, and having drained the purses of his English subjects, Richard went to France, where for five years he continued a desultory warfare with the king, and 'played at castle-taking,' says the chronicler, who loyally excuses the king's greediness in his exactions.

On his landing in Normandy, his brother John came before him as a suppliant, begging on his knees for forgiveness; at the request of Queen Eleanor, Richard received him into favour, but did not restore the lands or castles of which he had been deprived. In a sharp encounter between the Kings of England and France, King Philip and twenty knights in armour were precipitated into the river Epte by the breaking of a bridge, and Philip was extricated with difficulty. Another Philip, the Bishop of Beauvais, took a principal share in the war. Richard attributed the sufferings which he underwent in captivity in great measure to this martial prelate's influence, and when the bishop was taken prisoner he was thrown into a dungeon at Rouen and loaded with chains. The bishop appealed to Rome; but the Pope sent him a rebuke for having neglected the duties of his office to join in battle, and especially for contending against one who had been the champion of the Cross. Soon afterwards, however, Innocent wrote to Richard, asking for his compassion; but the king replied by sending the bishop's coat of mail, and he was not restored to liberty till the next reign. The principal duty which devolved on the justiciary during

¹ Hook's 'Lives of the Archbishops,' ii. 603.

Richard's absence was to raise money, and England was, according to a contemporary writer, 'reduced to poverty from one sea to the other.' In the year 1196, when a large sum was required, the magistrates of London decided on raising it by a poll-tax. The injustice of imposing so large a part of the burden on the poor excited great discontent, and the murmurs of the people were forcibly expressed by William Fitz-Osbert, a man of education, who had accompanied the king to the crusade, and who spoke eloquently both in English and French. He crossed the Channel to state the grievances of the people personally to the king, who, as usual, promised redress, but neglected to take any steps to ensure it. On Fitz-Osbert's return, associations were formed by which fifty-two thousand persons bound themselves to obey their advocate, who was called Long-beard and the Defender of the Poor. The richer citizens were alarmed, and the archbishop called a folk-mote. The prelate was also a man of persuasive eloquence, and had in Palestine controlled masses of men. Hostages were required from the associates, and Fitz-Osbert saw that a storm was gathering. He raised his axe against an officer who was sent to arrest him, and took refuge in the church of St. Mary-le-Bow, which he fortified. For three days he remained in this sanctuary; on the fourth day it was set on fire, and Fitz-Osbert, whilst escaping, was wounded and captured. He was hastily tried and condemned, was dragged ignominiously to Tyburn, and hanged in chains with nine of his followers. 'Thus,' says Matthew Paris, the monk of St. Alban's, 'William of the Beard was shamefully put to death by his fellow-citizens for defending the cause of the poor; and if the justice of the cause constitutes a martyr, we may surely set him down as one.' The people flocked to see the place where the 'king of the poor' had expired, until all such manifestations of interest were forcibly repressed. The violation of this sanctuary was charged against the archbishop, and the Pope, in consequence, some time afterwards urged him to relinquish his office of justiciary and confine himself to his religious duties.¹

It was Richard's fate to perish at last in an ignoble quarrel with one of his continental barons.

The Count of Limoges offered the king part of a treasure found on his estate; Richard demanded the whole, and besieged the count's castle of Chaluz. When riding round the walls,

¹ Hook's 'Lives of the Archbishops,' ii. 614. Fitz-Osbert has been erroneously called a Saxon; his name proves Norman descent, and at this time the distinction between Normans and Saxons had nearly disappeared.

Richard was wounded in the shoulder by an arrow. His troops took the castle by storm, and the archer who aimed the fatal shaft was brought before the king, who was sinking after the unskilful extraction of the arrow. Richard gave the man liberty, and money to carry him home; but the attendants frustrated his intentions, and put the archer to a cruel death. Richard bequeathed his heart to the citizens of Rouen, and was interred at Fontevraud, near his father's grave.

'Traditional adulation,' as has been well said by Sir F. Palgrave, has encouraged a higher appreciation than was deserved by Richard Cœur de Lion, whose reckless prodigality and rapacity far outweighed the few acts of clemency remembered to his honour. The only benefits which can be ascribed to him, in compensation for so much wasted treasure, were two charters, by one of which uniformity was established in weights and measures; by the other time was allotted during which property in a shipwrecked vessel might be claimed by the owner's family, instead of its being at once surrendered to the crown.¹ London had been greatly improved since the destruction caused by fire in the reign of Stephen; and in the beginning of Richard's reign the mayor procured an order that buildings of stone, roofed with slate or tile, should in future take the place of wooden houses thatched with straw. Fitz-Stephen, a monk of Canterbury, who died in this reign, described the manly sports in which the youth of London excelled, and said that the citizens were allowed to hunt in the neighbouring country. 'To this city,' says Fitz-Stephen, 'merchants bring goods from every country under heaven.' Some evils which he then deplored unhappily have not yet ceased—'the immoderate drinking of foolish persons, and the frequent fires.'² This early writer also described the benefit of one public eating-house which had been lately established, at which it was possible to obtain fresh meat quickly; a great advantage, as he said, when friends arrived without notice.

¹ Lingard, ii. 352. It appears probable that Archbishop Hubert obtained the passing of the first-mentioned charter.

² See description of the most noble city of London, in Stow's 'Survey.'

CHAPTER XI.

JOHN.

A.D. 1199-1216.

RICHARD had apparently wished that the young prince Arthur, son of his late brother Geoffrey, should succeed him; but he had been reconciled by Queen Eleanor to his brother John, and is said on his deathbed to have declared him heir to the throne, and to have left him a third of his property. John was at his brother's side when he expired; Arthur, who was only in his twelfth year, had been placed by Constance, the boy's mother, under the protection of the King of France, who had been in turn John's ally and adversary. Normandy, Poitou, and Aquitaine admitted the claims of John (the latter provinces were the inheritance of Queen Eleanor), and John received the ducal coronet at Rouen from the archbishop. But Touraine and Anjou, which had become appendages of the English kings on the accession of Henry II., declared in favour of Arthur, and before John departed to England he revenged himself by destroying the greater part of Mans and Angers. The question of inheritance between an uncle and the son of his deceased elder brother, was at this time not perfectly settled even in cases of private succession; and in regard to the inheritance of the crown, the choice of the people was nominally needful to perfect a legal title.¹

Although Geoffrey was Duke of Bretagne, and by long usage the English nation preferred the claim of a king's son, some of the leading men inclined to Arthur, till the justiciary commanded all freemen to swear allegiance to John, and procured a unanimous resolution in his favour at a great council held at Northampton. John was crowned at Westminster on May 26. To justify the succession of a prince who had been, five years previously, declared an outlaw by many then present,

¹ See Hallam, ii. 125-6; and Lingard, iii. 3.

the Archbishop of Canterbury is said to have made a remarkable speech, declaring the crown not to be the property of any individual, but the gift bestowed by the nation on the member of the royal family who appeared the most deserving.¹ The archbishop seems to have attempted to bind John by oath to preserve the Church, to reform the law, and to see justice rightly administered; and to have solemnly exhorted him not to accept the kingly office unless he was determined to discharge faithfully all its obligations. John was, of course, ready to assent to every demand.

For a short time the King of France preserved friendly relations with John. By his advice, Arthur did homage to his uncle for the duchy of Bretagne, Philip insisting on John's going through the same feudal ceremony himself for his dominions in France. But the vices and follies of the King of England soon gave Philip of France that pretext to interfere which he impatiently desired. John, after being divorced from his first wife, had just sent proposals for the hand of a princess of Portugal, when he became captivated with Isabella of Angoulême, whom he brought to England as his bride, although she had been privately married to the Count de la Marche. The count appealed to Philip as the Lord paramount of both parties, and Philip eagerly took up the quarrel. The queen dowager, Eleanor, was residing at the castle of Mirabeau, in Poitou, defended by a weak garrison. To the young Arthur was unhappily consigned the task of investing Mirabeau. Eleanor found means to acquaint John with her danger. John brought a prompt rescue, and Arthur was taken prisoner and sent to the castle of Falaise. Arthur had been repeatedly warned not to trust himself in the power of his uncle. John is said to have visited him in his captivity, to have expostulated with him on his alliance with the King of France, and to have tried in vain to induce him to relinquish his hereditary pretensions. Shortly afterwards, Arthur was transferred to a dungeon in the castle of Rouen, and was never seen again. The silence concerning the manner of his death afforded sufficient presumption that he was murdered; and a report was spread that John, who was supposed capable of any base action, had stained his own hands with his nephew's blood. The whispers of dark suspicion were soon succeeded by a general conviction of the king's guilt.

¹ Doubt has been cast on the authenticity of this address; but, in a charter given in the first year of his reign, John calls himself king by hereditary right, and through the consent and favour of the Church and people.—Hallam, ii. 126.

The Bretons assembled, and pledged themselves to revenge the death of their young prince. The Bishop of Rennes appeared in Paris to accuse the King of England of the crime, and Philip was most happy to avail himself of the opportunity of citing John to answer the charge. John demanded an assurance of safety if he should obey the summons of the King of France. 'Willingly,' said Philip; 'let him come unmolested.' 'And return?' cautiously inquired the English envoy. 'By all the saints of France,' exclaimed Philip, 'he shall not return unless acquitted.' John, who did not venture to answer the summons, was declared guilty of felony and treason, and all the lands which he held by homage were forfeited.

The King of France may have exceeded the proper bounds of his feudal sovereignty, as Arthur was not his vassal for the independent duchy of Brittany; but the stigma cast upon the King of England justified the attempt which Philip had long hoped to make, of rescuing the French provinces from his grasp. He now poured his troops into Normandy, and took town after town, while the King of England, enfeebled by the badness of his cause, hardly attempted any defence. In two years Normandy, Maine, and Anjou were irrecoverably lost to the English and re-annexed to the French crown, from which Normandy had been separated for three hundred years.¹ The change brought good results to both countries. The English nobles felt themselves more bound in sympathy with the people of England when they were no longer likewise foreign proprietors.

On the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury in July, 1205, John was involved in a serious difference with the Pope. The influence which the kings of England had previously exercised over the election of the heads of the Church had been resented by the court of Rome. The monks of Canterbury, without the sanction of the king or the bishops, fixed on the promotion of their own sub-prior. The king desired to raise to the primacy his favourite, John de Gray, Bishop of Norwich, one of the justiciaries, while Innocent III. determined on placing Stephen de Langton, a learned Englishman whom he had lately made cardinal, at the head of the English Church. John could only object to Langton's appointment that it was the Pope's dictation. The monks of Canterbury acceded to it; on them the king first took vengeance, expelling them from their convent and seizing their lands. In the rough language in which he

¹ Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' i. 23; Lingard, iii. 13.

usually indulged, John swore that Langton should never set foot in England as Archbishop of Canterbury. The contest thus became a trial of strength between the king and the Pope. The strongest weapons in the papal arsenal were interdict and excommunication. 'The interdict,' says a Catholic historian, 'was a singular form of punishment, by which the person of the king was spared, and his subjects, the unoffending parties, were made to suffer.'¹

The Pope entrusted the publication of the interdict to the Bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester. On March 23, 1208, these prelates waited on the king to urge him, by admitting the claims of the new archbishop, to avert the dreadful consequences which were to follow. But John ridiculed their appeal and drove the prelates ignominiously away. They fled to the continent.

It is difficult now to conceive the general desolation when on the appointed day the churches were shut and the sound of the convent bell no longer marked the time of day or guided the lonely traveller to shelter for the night; when the dead were carried outside the gates of towns to be buried without prayer. Fearful of the effect on the public mind, John endeavoured to prevent the clergy from obeying the Pope's mandate. In the dioceses of Winchester, Durham, and Norwich the interdict was only partially observed; marriages were allowed to take place, but only at the church door; the children were baptised, and the last offices of religion were not refused to the dying. John threw into prison the relations of those bishops who executed the interdict, required the noblemen whose disloyalty he dreaded to send him hostages for their fidelity, and seized on the corn belonging to some of the clergy. About a year after the promulgation of the interdict, divine service was allowed to be performed once a week in the convent churches, through the intercession of the Archbishop of Canterbury.²

Notwithstanding the interdict, however, John obtained troops enough to make a successful expedition to Ireland and Wales. In order to avoid the threatened excommunication, which would have rendered his power still more insecure, he

¹ Lingard. 'The Bishop of London,' says Dr. Milman, 'who without resistance pronounced the fatal ban against the citizens of London, had fears or conscientious scruples about the sentence against the king. The godless John alone remained unsmitten and untouched.'—*Annals of St. Paul's*, p. 41.

² Roger de Wendover, ii. 248. Dr. Milman complains that either 'from sorrow or from awe,' few of the annalists of the time have described the state of the public mind when thus suddenly deprived of all the sacred offices which had been held so essential in life and death.

ordered all the English ports to be guarded, and threatened with the severest punishment any persons who should bring into England the Act of Excommunication. The papal envoy who came to England at John's request in 1211, must have beheld with surprise the brilliant court which still surrounded the English king. John was keeping high festival at Northampton to celebrate his victory over the Welsh, and few courtiers had deserted him. Although no one dared to publish the excommunication, it became widely known, and Geoffrey, Archdeacon of Norwich, spoke to his friends of the impropriety of continuing in allegiance to such a sovereign. The words so imprudently uttered were reported to the king, who ordered the archdeacon to be thrown into prison, where, by John's express order, the unhappy man was weighed down under 'a cope,' or large mantle of lead, in the form of those worn by clergymen, and left without food or assistance till he expired.¹

Four years had passed under interdict, and still the king's obstinacy remained unsubdued. The archbishop and other prelates presented a remonstrance to the Pope, describing the necessity for some still more powerful measure against the tyrant who defied the Church. Innocent III. aspired to be the director of all the princes of Europe. He absolved the vassals of the King of England from their oaths of fealty, and proclaimed to the princes and warriors of Europe the duty of taking arms to dethrone the disobedient sovereign. The honour of being the champion of this new crusade was awarded to the King of France, and Philip summoned a numerous army to meet on the coast for the invasion of England.

But although John was generally detested, his call to arms was immediately obeyed. Earls, barons, knights, freemen, serving men, all hastened to obey the summons to defend their country from invasion, and the numbers flocking to the coast so far exceeded the means of victualling the army, that all were dismissed who had not been trained to arms. The Bishop of Norwich, who was the royal deputy in Ireland, joined the army with a large number of horse. The English fleet crossed the Channel, captured a squadron at the mouth of the Seine, and burnt the town of Dieppe. Sixty thousand men stood under the English banners at Barham Downs; yet John's heart was troubled by fears of threatening conspiracies, for, according to the chronicler's expression, his enemies were as numerous as his nobles. A prophecy uttered

¹ Lingard, iii. 71.

by Peter, the Yorkshire hermit, to the effect that John would cease to be a king on the coming Ascension Day, especially agitated the king's mind. Indeed the Pope desired to prevail over John by spiritual rather than by military weapons. The papal legate, Pandulf, appeared before the king at Dover, with authority to receive his submission if made before June 1, and the legate craftily enlarged on all the dangers which threatened the king. After much hesitation, John at last yielded, and subscribed to terms which he had before rejected, agreeing to admit Langton to be Archbishop of Canterbury, to reinstate those whom he had driven into exile, and to make restitution for the injuries which he had inflicted, provided the sentences of interdict and excommunication were revoked. Four powerful barons confirmed these stipulations by their oaths. But it was not as an impartial arbiter between the king and the archbishop, or between the king and his justly offended subjects, that the Pope was willing to revoke his threats. An opportunity had occurred for requiring that oath of fealty which Innocent was eager to exact, and to exemplify his right, as the Head of the Church, 'of trampling on the necks of kings.'¹ On May 15 the king, attended by his nobles, met the legate in the church near Dover, belonging to the Templars, and there, in the usual form of a vassal towards a superior, John put into Pandulf's hands a declaration, that as an act of atonement for his offences against religion, he, of his own free will, and with the consent of his barons, surrendered to the Pope and his successors his kingdom of England and Ireland, to be held of him and the Church of Rome in fee. As a vassal to his lord he then swore fealty to the representative of the Pope.

The next day was the feast of the Ascension, before which, according to the rash prophet's prediction, John would lose his crown. In the opinion of many, John had himself fulfilled the prophecy by his surrender; but he showed himself the same as ever, causing the pretended hermit and his son to be condemned as false prophets, dragged at the tails of horses, and hanged.² By this surrender, John averted a pressing danger, but gained no respect from his barons. He summoned his retainers to Portsmouth to engage in war with the King of France; but the barons refused attendance, and insisted that the exiles should first be recalled. The king was compelled to allow the immediate return of Langton and the other exiled bishops.

¹ Hallam, i. 551.

² See Shakespeare, 'King John,' act iv. 2.

They met at Winchester. John and the archbishop embraced, but at the entrance of the cathedral, before the sentence of excommunication was revoked, the archbishop required John to swear that he would abolish all illegal customs, restore to every man his rights, and revive the laws of the good King Edward.

John was burning for war; he even advanced to Jersey, but none of his barons followed him. He returned to England infuriated with revenge, but the archbishop reminded him that accused persons must be tried before they were punished. 'Rule you the Church,' replied the king, roughly, 'and leave me to govern the state.'

It might have been expected that Langton, a cardinal, and nominated by the Pope, would have been satisfied with re-establishing the privileges of the Church; but from the day when he returned to England he showed himself the able vindicator of the rights of his fellow-countrymen of every class, a true-hearted Englishman whom no threats could deter from the path of duty.¹ The Pope, on the contrary, having secured John as his vassal, was now ready to support him in utter disregard of his subjects.²

Two important meetings took place in St. Paul's Churchyard within a month. On August 25 the archbishop produced before the assembled bishops, barons, and other dignitaries, a copy of that charter given by Henry I. at his accession, which that king had afterwards taken measures to destroy, but which contained a true statement of the privileges for which they had the right to contend. The assembly did not separate till they had bound themselves by oath to conquer or die in the defence of their liberties.³

Another and very different assembly was convened in the same place in the following month, when John, in presence of the clergy and people, before the high altar, repeated to the Cardinal Nicholas, the papal legate, that notorious and dishonourable submission by which he had resigned his crown and kingdom into the hands of the Pope. Forty thousand marks were paid over in compensation to the prelates, the payment of the inferior claimants being postponed; and at length the interdict, which had lasted more than six years, was solemnly revoked, amidst the ringing of bells and the chanting of the 'Te Deum.' Had John been willing to satisfy all who had been

¹ See 'Theological Essays' by Rev. F. D. Maurice, p. 393.

² Lingard makes this admission, iii. 39.

Thierry, ii. 152; and Lingard.

injured, the task would have proved impossible. Forests had been felled, houses burnt, and all kinds of property destroyed. The clergy who had not left England, the nuns and abbesses, all now claimed compensation, but found no redress. Relieved from the papal censure, John tried to re-establish his power on the continent. Otto, Emperor of Germany, was his ally; but at the battle of Bouvines, in Flanders, the French army was victorious, and after this defeat John returned to England, to pursue his contest with his discontented subjects. On November 20 the barons assembled at the Abbey of St. Edmund's, in Suffolk, under the pretence of celebrating the festival of the patron saint, but in reality to concert their plans, and pledged themselves to withdraw their allegiance if John should resist their claims. At the feast of the Epiphany, in January, they presented their demands. John, having in vain endeavoured to persuade them to desist, deferred the consideration of their claims till the following Easter.

His fears were now awakened; he garrisoned his castles, sent to Flanders and Poitou for soldiers, and endeavoured to pacify the clergy by granting them freedom of election. He ordered the sheriffs to assemble the freemen in every county, to renew their oaths of allegiance; he even thought of taking the cross, that he might be protected by the security which the Church granted to crusaders, 'being induced to this,' says the chronicler, 'more by fear than devotion.'

In Easter week, 1215, the barons assembled at Stamford, and proceeded to Brackley, in Northamptonshire, accompanied by two thousand knights and a long train of followers.

John, who was at Oxford, sent the Archbishop of Canterbury and others to ask their demands. On receiving a paper containing a statement of the rights on which they insisted, the king exclaimed, with indignation, 'They might as well have demanded my crown! Do they think that I will grant them liberties which would make me a slave?' He declared that he would appeal to the Pope, now his feudal superior, who protected all the champions of the Cross, and Pandulf threatened the barons with excommunication.

The threat produced no effect upon Archbishop Langton, who declared that if the king would not dismiss the foreign troops whom he had lately brought into the kingdom, he should oppose him in every way. As a last resource, John proposed to refer the matter to the decision of nine persons, of whom four should be chosen by himself, four by the barons, the ninth by the Pope. Langton, having no confidence in the papal

decision, rejected the offer, and the barons now solemnly appealed to arms, and chose Robert Fitzwalter, Earl of Dunmore, for their general. The number of their followers increased rapidly. There was a general excitement among all the freemen of England, and it was in vain that John now sought, by special offers, to detach the barons from the cause of which they were the champions. Their army first attacked Northampton Castle, which was garrisoned by foreign mercenaries, and refused to capitulate. Being unprovided with the means of conducting a regular siege, the barons proceeded to Bedford, where they were gladly received. On May 24 they entered London, where the citizens hailed them as national deliverers, and the mayor took his place among the leaders of the army.

John had fled to Odiham, in Hampshire; he was dismayed at the defection of London, and now declared his readiness to submit to a conference.

The place chosen for this ever memorable negotiation was a grassy plain on the south bank of the Thames, called Runnymede, between Staines and Windsor. There, according to agreement, on June 15, John, accompanied by the legate, eight bishops, and fifteen noblemen and knights, some of whom attended him officially, although not friendly to his cause, confronted Fitzwalter and the majority of the English nobility. The side of the plain nearest to the present town of Egham was white with the tents of the confederates. Negotiations were carried on between the parties for several days, during which the principal mediators probably retired to the little island a short distance higher up the river, still called *Magna Charta Island*, which tradition points out as the scene of these memorable deliberations.¹ The great Charter which had been prepared was finally agreed upon, and the royal seal was solemnly affixed to it. It bears the date of the first day of the conference, the 15th, although the assembly did not end till June 19. The leaders who had 'defied' their sovereign then renewed their homage and allegiance, and were re-accepted by the king as his liegemen. To guard against John's habitual perfidy, the barons in the first place required that all foreign officers should be dismissed, that London should remain in their possession for two months, and that a committee of twenty-five barons should be empowered to decide conflicting claims. If the king should violate the terms, war might legally be levied against him. To the temperate

¹ Creasy 'On the Constitution,' p. 126.

zeal for the establishment of legal government shown by Archbishop Langton and the Earl of Pembroke, 'England,' says Hallam, 'was indebted, at this critical period, for the two greatest blessings that patriotic statesmen could confer—the preservation of civil liberty upon an immoveable basis, and the preservation of the national independence under the ancient line of sovereigns.'¹

By this covenant, which has always borne the name of *Magna Charta*, the worst grievances of the feudal tenants were redressed; wards and widows were protected from compulsory marriages; the city privileges formerly granted to London and other large towns were declared inviolable; and freedom of commerce was guaranteed to foreign merchants—a proof that the benefit of commerce with foreign nations was duly estimated.

The Court of Common Pleas, which in the reigns of the first Norman kings had been bound to follow the king's progresses, was fixed at Westminster for the general convenience, and it was decreed that no man who was not well acquainted with the law should preside over it. The Kings of England had gained much money by trading in justice. To guard against such an abuse, John was compelled to subscribe these words, 'We will not sell, we will not refuse, we will not delay right or justice to any one.' Also, since he had frequently ordered arbitrary arrests, demolished the castles, or injured the persons of his opponents, the king was required to promise that 'no freeman should be arrested or outlawed, nor should the king go upon him, except by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.' From this era, therefore, of *Magna Charta* it became a clear principle of English law, however frequently evaded or infringed, that no man should be detained in prison without a trial. Some mitigation was secured of the rigour attending the preservation of the royal forests; and to protect the great body of freemen who too frequently suffered oppression from the tyranny of their lords, a clause was inserted providing that every liberty and custom which the king had granted his tenants should be observed by the clergy and others towards men of inferior rank. 'In this just solicitude for the people, and in the moderation which infringed upon no essential prerogative of the monarchy, we may perceive,' says Hallam, 'a liberality and patriotism very unlike the selfishness imputed to those ancient barons.'²

Some stipulations bear witness to the simple occupations of

¹ 'Middle Ages,' ii. 109.

² *Ib.* ii. 108.

the great body of the people, and to the tyranny from which it was sought to defend them. 'We grant,' says the charter in the king's name, 'permission to every freeman to bring his pigs through the wood of our domain, and to inclose them in his own woods at his pleasure; and if any freeman's pigs wander in our forest for one night, it shall not be made a pretext to deprive him of any of his property.' It was also permitted to every freeman to take the honey found in his own woods.¹

The sheriffs were directed to read the charter in their county courts, and to receive from all freemen an oath of obedience to the twenty-four barons who had been appointed to be guardians of the commonwealth.

John had subscribed from intimidation; but it was far from his intention to keep within the pale of justice and the law, or to become what is now called a Constitutional king. As soon as the barons withdrew, he gave way to frantic demonstrations of anger. He despatched messengers to the continent to engage fresh mercenaries at any price, and sent an embassy to Rome to entreat the interposition of the Pope.

The barons were intending to celebrate their peaceful victory by a tournament, when they were informed of the king's treachery. They sent a deputation to remonstrate with him. John ridiculed and denied the charges, and required the barons to renew their oaths of allegiance, which they declined. There could be no doubt of John's hostile intentions when he hastened to Dover to enlist mercenary troops. The barons felt constrained to resume hostilities, and took possession of Rochester Castle, which John had made over to the archbishop as a pledge of his sincerity. But before sufficient preparations could be made against an attack, the castle was besieged by the king and his mercenary troops. While engaged in this siege, John received welcome news from Rome. The Pope, to whom he had humbly sworn fealty, did not abandon his vassal; but in the most decided words condemned, and *for ever annulled*, the great charter. It had been obtained, he declared, in despite of the See of Rome, to the degradation of royalty, to the disgrace of the nation, and to the impediment of the crusade.

Innocent cited the barons to appear before him at Rome, and, on their refusal, desired Langton to excommunicate them for disobedience. Langton refused, and was consequently suspended from his archiepiscopal office. The archbishop went to Rome in the hope of soothing the Pope's anger, but without success. Innocent III. issued a sentence of excommunication

¹ Roger of Wendover.

against all the principal confederates, and placed London under an interdict. But the awe inspired by such censures depended on the credulity of those on whom they were inflicted, and the spirit of England now rose in defiance. The barons determined that the Pope had no right to interfere in temporal concerns, and the clergy forbore to publish decrees which were, as they believed, obtained on false suggestions. Divine worship was continued throughout the city, with bells and chanting as usual. But, although the spiritual arm of the Pope availed little, John prepared to wreak his anger on the country which he had sworn to protect. He entrusted part of his army to the Earl of Salisbury, with directions to devastate the eastern counties, while he marched towards the north. The northern counties were exposed to greater cruelty than they had experienced since the Conqueror's exterminating expedition. John was a most sanguinary leader, and is said to have sometimes set fire with his own hands in the morning to the house in which he had just passed the night. Castles, towns, and villages were given to the flames, while the miserable inhabitants were abandoned to every species of ill usage. Wherever the royal troops could penetrate, the people fled to the forests and mountains; the fields were left without culture, and no markets held except in the churchyards, which, by the right of sanctuary, were generally, although not always, respected by the troopers. Meantime the barons, pent up behind the walls of London, dared not hazard an engagement with such numbers as followed the royal standard.

Everywhere their lands had been laid waste and two castles only remained in their power. After much anxious debate, they determined to choose some powerful prince as their chief, and, as a last resource, unanimously determined to offer the crown to Louis, eldest son of the King of France. Most strange and painful alternative, when the defenders of England's liberties could think of no other refuge from the power of a ruffian king! Louis was allied to the Plantagenets by his marriage, and it was thought that the French mercenaries whom John had enlisted would not bear arms against him. Louis did not venture to cross the Channel till he had obtained twenty-four hostages from the noblest English families. The Pope forbade him to invade England, as it had become a fief of the Holy See; but Louis, to whom the proposal was most acceptable, endeavoured to set up a rightful claim, urging his wife's relationship to the royal family; and that John, being convicted of murder in the court of Paris, had forfeited his title. At this

important crisis, however, the death of Innocent III. deprived John of his most powerful ally. The French prince landed at Sandwich, reduced Rochester Castle, and soon reached London.

It was a strange event when English barons and London citizens formed a procession to conduct a French prince with honour to St. Paul's as the patron of their freedom. Having received the homage of his new subjects, Louis took a solemn oath to protect and assist them in the recovery of their rights. He charmed the English by his affability, and gained their confidence by choosing Simon Langton, the brother of the primate, as his chancellor.

The people near London, and those in the northern and eastern counties, were favourable; but the fortresses remained in the king's power, and Louis spent four months, without success, in the siege of Dover Castle. It was not long before some signs of reaction were apparent. The men of the Cinque-Ports continually obstructed the French supplies; associations against Louis were formed in the southern counties; and John took every opportunity of detaching his partisans by gifts or promises, and of pillaging the lands of opponents.

Louis offended some of the English barons by giving earldoms to Frenchmen, and the suspicion spread that the French prince secretly despised the English on account of their disloyalty to their king.

Swayed by a natural repugnance to the change to which they had been brought by circumstances without example, several barons and knights returned to their old allegiance, and many others only waited before doing so for the assurance of pardon from the king.

At this juncture, when the path of true patriotism was so difficult to trace, England was suddenly relieved by death from that cruel and dastardly ruler to whom no circumstances could ever teach wisdom. John, in returning from Lincoln to Lynn, where he kept supplies, crossed the Wash at a dangerous time of the tide. He reached the land with his army in safety, but beheld with dismay the long train of waggons and sumpter-horses carrying his baggage and treasures as they sank in the surge. With a heavy heart he proceeded to the convent of Swineshead, where, from fatigue and anxiety, or the effects of intemperance, he sickened with a dangerous fever. Having taken to a litter he reached Newark Castle in a two days' journey, and after giving directions for his will, appointing his eldest son, Henry, to succeed him, and dictating a letter to the Pope,

entreating his protection for his children, he died on October 19, in the forty-ninth year of his age and the seventeenth of his reign. For some years previously the conquests of the Mahometan Emir had alarmed Europe, lest the Christian faith should be extinguished in the southern provinces of Spain, which were under the Moorish rule. During the interdict, when John was in dread of the hostility of the Pope, of the King of France, and of the disloyalty of his barons, it is said that he sent to Spain a secret deputation asking for the Emir's alliance. But when Mahomed became aware of John's uncertain tenure of power he declined entering into any negotiations. If this really occurred about the year 1212, it would be an additional reason for the Pope's absolving John's vassals from their fealty, and for his exhortation that all Christian princes should unite in the dethronement of so impious a king.¹

It had been creditable to Richard Cœur de Lion that he made some feeble attempt at the beginning of his reign to shield the Jews from their persecutors. But no forbearance from cruelty is attributed to John. One instance, often dwelt on, was that of a rich Jew of Bristol, who, having resisted the payment of ten thousand marks, was condemned by the king to have a tooth knocked out every morning till he paid the sum. The Jew suffered the loss of seven teeth before he gave security for the required payment.

The reign of a sovereign so much hated and despised proved an important benefit to England, from the general patriotism called forth in resistance to tyranny.

'The great-grandsons of those who had fought under William, and the great-grandsons of those who fought under Harold,' were forming at length a united people, and the great charter, which was won from the basest of the Norman kings, chiefly by Anglo-Norman nobles, was devised for the benefit of all.²

It was in the 13th century that the English language became substantially, as at present, the mother tongue of every Englishman. Lord Chatham, when addressing the House of Lords on January 9, 1770, thus spoke of the men of 1215:—'It is to *your* ancestors, my lords—it is to the English barons, that we are indebted for the laws and constitution we possess. Their virtues were rude and uncultivated, but they were great and sincere. Their understandings were as little polished as their

¹ Lingard, iii. 27, and note.

² See the observations of Lord Macaulay, i. 16.

manners, but they had hearts to distinguish right from wrong ; they had heads to distinguish truth from falsehood ; they understood the rights of humanity, and they had spirit to maintain them. . . . When they obtained from their sovereign that great acknowledgment of national rights contained in Magna Charta, they did not confine it to themselves alone, but delivered it, as a common blessing, to the whole people. They did not say, These are the rights of the great barons ; or, These are the rights of the great prelates. No, my lords, they said in the simple Latin of the times, "*nullus liber homo capiatur*," no freeman shall be taken, and provided as carefully for the meanest subject as for the greatest. These are uncouth words, and sound but poorly in the ears of scholars, neither are they addressed to the criticism of scholars, but to the hearts of freemen. These three words, *nullus liber homo*, have a meaning which interests us all ; they deserve to be remembered—to be inculcated in our minds—they are worth all the classics.' It is true, says Mr. Creasy, who cites this striking passage, that at the time of the charter a large part of the population was not free ; but it should be remembered that some of the villeins were constantly being raised to freedom, and that the ultimate effect of this charter was to grant full protection of property and person to every human being breathing English air. The great charter acknowledged the authority of the hereditary sovereign, but admitted the supremacy of law even over the sovereign himself.¹

¹ See Creasy's 'Rise and Progress of the Constitution,' pp. 150, 181, 219.

CHAPTER XII.

HENRY III.

A.D. 1216-1272.

THE sudden death of King John occurred at a very critical time for England. The feeling of desperation under which the barons had invited Louis of France to be their ruler had already abated; associations against the French had been formed in the southern counties, and several castles, including Windsor and Dover, were holding out for the king at the time of his unexpected death. It is said that Louis, immediately on receiving the news, summoned Hubert de Burgh from the defence of Dover Castle, and offered him high honours if he would support his claims; but De Burgh replied by asserting the right of John's eldest son, Prince Henry, who had but just completed his tenth year. The principal barons rallied round their young prince, and only ten days after his father's death Henry III. was crowned at Gloucester with a plain circle of gold, instead of the crown which had been lost in the Wash with other royal treasures. The care of the young king was entrusted to the Earl of Pembroke, earl-marshal, an able and excellent nobleman, who administered public affairs, until his death in 1219, under the title of Guardian of the Kingdom. A council was assembled at Bristol, the great charter was revised, and those provisions which were thought to infringe too far on the royal privileges were for the present suspended, though it was distinctly stated that these were not repealed, and would be afterwards submitted to the consideration of a full assembly of barons.¹ But on the extinction of John's tyranny, notwithstanding the show of loyalty towards his son, the French prince could not be expected to relinquish his pretensions without a further struggle. That crown which had been too rashly offered to prevent the annihilation of English freedom, Louis now

¹ Lingard, iii. 75.

wished to retain for his own benefit. During a short truce, he visited the continent and increased his army. The conduct of the foreign soldiers on their march through England brought on them the hatred of the inhabitants, and the efforts of Pembroke to raise a strong royalist army were seconded by the Pope's legate, who exhorted the soldiers to fight for their king and country, and freely wielded the thunders of the Church. On May 19 a great battle was fought at Lincoln, which destroyed great part of the prince's army, and secured the young king in the possession of his crown. Destruction chiefly fell on the combatants of low degree; men of rank were often saved through the influence of relationship, or from the hope of ransom. Louis took refuge in London, and compelled the citizens to renew, no doubt unwillingly, their promises of allegiance. His only hope lay in the exertions of his princess, Blanche of Castile, who solicited and obtained from the most powerful French nobles a considerable fleet, which sailed from Calais under the command of a celebrated pirate.¹ The brave English justiciary, Hubert de Burgh, perceived the danger to be imminent. He collected forty sail from the Cinque Ports; but the French fleet numbered twice as many, while several knights refused to attend his summons, alleging their ignorance of naval tactics. When Hubert left Dover Castle he gave stringent orders that it should not be surrendered even to save his life should he be taken prisoner. By the bravery of his men and the skill of the archers, Hubert obtained the victory; and Louis, whose hopes perished with the fleet, accepted the terms offered by the legate and the earl-marshal. He restored to the English barons the fealty which they had sworn, offering the same terms to the King of Scotland and the Welsh prince, and leaving the discharge of debts and ransom of prisoners to be afterwards arranged. By secret agreement Henry promised to pay to Louis ten thousand marks, and Louis is said to have promised that on his accession to the throne of France he would restore to Henry the provinces lost by John; a promise more easily made than fulfilled.

The civil war was followed by much insubordination and frequent outrages, and we learn that the legate assisted the Earl of Pembroke in the restoration of order. After the earl's death, in 1219, authority was chiefly in the hands of Hubert de Burgh; but the young king was entrusted to the care of Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, who favoured the foreign settlers, and was continually at enmity with Hubert.

¹ Eustace le Moine, Lingard. The name was of course given in derision.

The coronation at Gloucester having been held insufficient, the ceremony was repeated at Westminster by the venerable Archbishop Langton, in May, 1220. In the same year a striking scene occurred at Canterbury. Some time after the murder of Becket great part of the cathedral had been destroyed by fire—a disaster universally lamented; after which English and French workmen had been employed for forty years in its restoration and embellishment, and a shrine was constructed at its eastern end to contain the remains of the sainted archbishop. Two years' notice had been given of the intended ceremonial, and on the appointed day an unexampled multitude flocked to Canterbury to witness the 'translation' of the corpse. The young king, a child of thirteen years, headed the procession; Pandulph, the Pope's legate, Archbishop Langton, and his brother, the Archbishop of Rheims, Hubert de Burgh, 'the greatest statesman of his time,' and other lords, assisted in bearing the coffin from the crypt to the sumptuous enclosure which remained for three centuries the attraction of English pilgrims. The day was named in the calendar the Feast of the Translation of St. Thomas.¹

The late king had encouraged a set of ruffians who for some time continued to defy the law, and on whom even the chief justiciary could not execute justice without risking the perils of civil war. One of these lawless chiefs, Fawkes, who held Bedford Castle, was condemned at the Dunstable assizes to pay a fine of 3,000*l.* Determined on resisting this award, Fawkes waylaid the judges, one of whom he threw into the dungeon of his castle. Hubert de Burgh resolved to proceed vigorously against this great offender, who was also a partisan of his rival, the Bishop of Winchester. The young king was induced to join in the attack on Bedford Castle, and an aid was offered by the clergy. Two wooden towers were raised so high as to give the besiegers a view into the castle, and, after a siege of some weeks, the garrison surrendered. Eighty of the military adventurers are said to have suffered death; the archers were sent to fight against the Turks in Palestine; and Fawkes, the great offender, was banished. This success confirmed for some years the authority of De Burgh, and the Bishop of Winchester left England on the plea of joining the crusaders. But in 1232 an expedition into France, in which De Burgh accompanied the king, proving unsuccessful, the authority of the justiciary declined, and the bishop returned to take part against him. It having been reported to the king that Hubert and his relatives had acquired large revenues at the expense of the crown, the justiciary was

¹ See Dr. Stanley's 'Memorials of Canterbury,' p. 164.

commanded to account for all the sums which he had received since his appointment—a time including the whole of the present and great part of the preceding reign—and it was by special interest that he obtained five months to prepare himself for trial.

When, however, in spite of this promised favour, De Burgh saw a body of 300 horsemen approaching for his arrest, he fled from his bed to the parish church, raised a cross, and awaited his pursuers on the steps of the altar. He was seized and carried off; but Henry, fearing the popular resentment at this violation of sanctuary, ordered him to be conveyed back to the church, where he was besieged by the sheriff of Essex. Strange vicissitude, when an English justiciary, lately so highly esteemed, was brought to terms by hunger, and thrown into confinement in the Tower!

When summoned before a court, Hubert offered no defence, but appealed to the king's mercy. He was sentenced to forfeit all his acquired possessions, and placed under custody in the castle of Devizes. The evil conduct of the Bishop of Winchester, who attained power after Hubert's disgrace, led to fresh dissensions between the king and the barons. Dreading lest he might fall into the hands of his great enemy, De Burgh contrived to cross the moat at night and to reach the castle of the Earl of Pembroke. When peace was restored, De Burgh was not only included in the pacification, but readmitted to the council, and allowed to regain his estates; a proof of the instability of the king's purposes and of the small discredit then attached to a humiliating surrender. It was during this civil strife that the nobles of England first received into their ranks an eminent man, who, although more than half a Frenchman, zealously assisted the progress of English liberty. Simon de Montfort was the younger son of a nobleman of that name in France, who had been a leader in the persecution of the heretical Albigenses of Languedoc. During the last reign the elder Simon had acquired the title of Earl of Leicester from his mother, who was an English countess, though driven from England owing to a quarrel with King John. It was necessary that the earl's heirs should choose between homage to the King of France or to the Sovereign of England, for strict rules of nationality then forbade the union of French and English vassalage. Amauri, the elder brother, surrendered his claim to the English inheritance to Simon, who accordingly, in August, 1231, did homage for the estates of his grandmother, the Countess of Leicester, and became

from that day forth an Englishman.¹ In 1234 Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had succeeded Langton in 1228, convened a council at Westminster to remonstrate in the strongest terms against the conduct of the Bishop of Winchester in placing the strongholds of the country under foreigners. It was 'by hard words, and sometimes by hard blows,' that the opposition effected a change of ministry in the 13th century.² The Earl of Pembroke, earl-marshal, who had married Eleanor, the king's sister, died suddenly in Ireland, under circumstances favouring the gravest suspicions of treachery on the part of the Bishop of Winchester.³ In her first distress Eleanor retired to a convent, where she took a vow against any future marriage, although she did not become a nun. De Montfort succeeded in changing her determination, and on January 7, 1238, she was privately married to him at Westminster, with the consent of the king, who gave her away in person. The barons, however, resented this act with violence, as an outrage against their order. The hand of an English princess had been given in secret without their approval, and they threatened to rise in arms under the leadership of the king's brother, Richard of Cornwall. De Montfort next found means to pacify the barons; but the Church remained so implacable, that, leaving his wife at Kenilworth, he set off early in March to obtain the Pope's forgiveness. Having so far succeeded he returned to England in October, where he was well received by the king; was created Earl of Leicester on February 2, and in June stood godfather to Prince Edward. But a change came quickly over the fickle temper of Henry, and when De Montfort and his wife appeared at court a few weeks later, the king expelled them with slanderous reproaches. De Montfort sought present safety in exile; but, after two or three years spent abroad, he was again serving the king, being in fact his right hand in 'a foolish war' waged by Henry against Louis IX. Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, one of the most learned men of the time, and a devoted churchman, persistently opposed the intrusion into England of the swarm of foreign clergy who overran the kingdom after John had declared himself the Pope's vassal. The bishop and his friend Adam of Marsh, also an ecclesiastic, were on the most friendly

¹ See 'Quarterly Review,' January, 1866.—'Simon de Montfort.'

² Dr. Hook's 'Lives of the Archbishops,' iii. 169-71.

³ Dr. Hook describes in vivid terms the horror caused by the sight of letters sealed with the royal seal, exciting the Irish nobles to compass the death of the earl-marshal. Pembroke was the son of the earl who was instrumental in obtaining Magna Charta.—'Lives,' iii. 111.

terms with De Montfort; and their letters, which are still extant, testify their respect for his character, and that in spite of his foreign birth and education he had gained the cordial esteem of the people, who showed general enmity to these foreign intruders.¹ The king's marriage to Eleanor of Provence in the year 1236 had increased the popular discontent by a further introduction of favourites from abroad.

Expeditions to France and abortive negotiations occupied many years of this reign. The important province of Gascony was preserved to the English rule by the valour and ability of De Montfort in several campaigns. In Gascony 'feudalism had run wild;' her nobles, like those of the Rhine, had degenerated into brigands. Although Normandy, Maine, and Anjou were lost in the former reign, some smaller provinces belonged to Henry, for which he, as Duke of Guienne (or Gascony), did homage to King Louis at Paris—a ceremonial of considerable significance.² In the year 1251, Alexander, who had just succeeded to the Scottish throne, came to York to contract a marriage with the Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry, on which occasion great magnificence was displayed by the English court. Alexander did homage for Lothian and other lands which he held as fiefs, but evaded the ceremony on behalf of Scotland—a point which was afterwards considered very important as a precedent.³

As a proof of the general insecurity at this period, it is related that in the year 1249 two merchants complained to the king at Winchester that they had been robbed by men whom they saw at his court, and that travellers were known to be continually exposed to the like danger and to murder. Although merchants and men of peace, they were ready to fight with those who had despoiled them, if they could obtain no legal redress. Henry ordered a jury to be summoned, but the jury, although men of landed estate, were afterwards believed to be confederates; they acquitted the accused, and it was with some difficulty that a verdict against them was at length obtained. Members of the royal household, who were accused of like offences, defended themselves by asserting that they received no wages from the king. Henry was, indeed, frequently

¹ Pauli's 'Old England,' p. 68; 'Quarterly Review;' and Lingard, iii. 179, for the character of Grosseteste.

² See observations on the moderation and equity of Louis IX. (St. Louis), son of the prince to whom the barons offered the English crown.—Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' i. 27.

³ Lothian had been once part of Northumberland, and was ceded to the King of Scots by the Saxon earl of the province in 1020, as a fief.—Sir W. Scott's 'History,' i. 16 and 36.

in great difficulties for money. The barons, jealous of his foreign dependents, sometimes refused to grant supplies, and the king was stripped by the great charter of so many lucrative prerogatives, that he could not defray the expenditure of government from his own resources.¹ He frequently demanded tallages from the citizens of London, who were increasing in wealth, and they offered him large gifts as a substitute. Once, when much in want of money, on being told that if he would dispose of his plate and jewels, the citizens would readily be the purchasers, he exclaimed with anger: 'Those clowns who take the name of barons and abound in everything, while we are reduced to necessities.' *Magna Charta* had carefully forbidden the abuse of the claim of purveyance; yet notwithstanding, the poor fishermen on the coast were plundered by the needy courtiers, and it was even said that the waxen tapers and splendid silks exhibited in clerical processions were the fruit of robbery and violence. Archbishop Boniface, of Canterbury, a foreign kinsman of the king's, is noted as employing numerous armed retainers through whom he gathered supplies for his household without payment.²

A council of prelates and barons assembled in Westminster Hall in May, 1253, passed severe censure on the king's frequent violations of the great charter, and required from him a solemn oath to maintain it in future. Obeying their demand, Henry, accompanied by the princes, attended on the appointed day, and took his place on the throne, on each side of which stood bishops holding lighted candles.

Magna Charta was read, after which the king invoked the witness of the Almighty that he would faithfully observe all its provisions, 'as I am a man, as I am a Christian, as I am a knight, as I am a king anointed and crowned.' Then, in the name of the Church, the Archbishop of Canterbury pronounced a malediction on all future violators of the liberties of England guaranteed by the two charters, whether such violators might be laymen or ecclesiastics, exclaiming: 'Thus may such offenders perish!' As he spoke these words he fiercely dashed his torch on the stones, and every bishop repeated them with the like action. The bell tolled as if for funeral service; a deep amen resounded from the whole assembly, including the king, and they all left the hall in solemn silence. Yet, for all the awful solemnity, no one believed Henry sincere; indeed, no sooner was the ceremonial ended than the royal favourites again monopo-

¹ Hallam, ii. 113.

² Hook's '*Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*,' iii. 253.

lised benefits and renewed their misdemeanours. *Magna Charta*, as has been recently observed, although continually violated by the holders of temporary power, was 'thirty-two times simply reaffirmed without ever having been repealed'¹—a proof that the national will remained steadfast in favour of freedom, until at length, after many conflicts, its provisions were triumphantly guaranteed in the Declaration of Rights.

A few years after this time fresh discontent was occasioned by renewed exactions. Henry allowed his younger son Edmund to accept the disputed crown of Sicily as a papal fief, and Richard, Earl of Cornwall, the king's brother, was chosen King of the Romans at Frankfort.² Supplies of money were needed by both. The English council stood aghast at the magnitude of their king's engagements, the neglect of which might be punished by an interdict.

A bad harvest, bringing famine upon the country, hastened the crisis. In May, 1258, when Henry attended his council at Westminster, he was surprised to see the barons arrayed in armour. At his entrance they put aside their swords; but, on his asking whether they designed to take him prisoner, Roger Bigod, the earl-marshal, replied in the name of the assembly: 'No, sir; but the kingdom is in misery through your prodigality and your partiality for foreigners, and we demand that a committee be appointed for the redress of grievances.'³ At De Montfort's suggestion, these barons determined to follow the precedent of Runnymede, requiring that the chief authority should be placed in the hands of twenty-four of their number, twelve of whom might be named by the king. The assembly was adjourned to Oxford, which on June 13, 1258, was crowded with the nobles and their retainers, the great majority adverse to the king. A writer of the next reign has called this great council 'the Mad Parliament.' Hugh Bigod was chosen justiciary for one year on condition of his responsibility to 'Parliament.' The great object was the exclusion of aliens. They resented that the strongest castles and fairest lands were held by foreigners, that foreign agents collected tithes for Italian clergy, and that the English priesthood was neglected for the

¹ See Mr. Gladstone on the Church of England, 'Contemporary Review,' July, 1875, p. 219.

² Innocent III. had offered Sicily to Edmund in 1254, which offer was repeated next year by Pope Alexander IV. Although the chances of obtaining the crown were most slender, the King of England offered to pay the Pope £90,000 for the expenses of the contest, and to land in Italy with an army. Richard was crowned King of the Romans in Aix-la-Chapelle at the end of 1256.—Hallam, ii. 114; Lingard, iii. 112-120.

³ See 'Quarterly Review,' No. 237.

support of Italians who were even ignorant of the English language. 'England for the English,' the great war-cry of the barons, went home to the hearts of the humblest.¹

By what were called the 'Provisions of Oxford,' Magna Charta was confirmed; the marriage of wards with aliens, and wasteful grants of lands to foreigners, were forbidden; and it was decreed that in future all offices of state, and the charge of the castles, should be entrusted to Englishmen alone. Twenty castles, including the Tower of London, are enumerated for which new constables were appointed; and the Poitevins, who refused to surrender their castles, feeling themselves in danger, fled to the castle of their associate, the Bishop of Winchester. But the barons sent a force in pursuit, and they were compelled to leave England after having promised that they would not damage the realm. Prince Edward was just entering his twentieth year when these scenes took place. He could not deny the justice of many charges brought against his father's rule, and it is recorded that 'being brought to it with great difficulty, he submitted himself to the ordinance and provision of the barons.' The concurrence of the City of London was obtained by De Montfort and the earl-marshal, and on October 11 the Provisions of Oxford were solemnly proclaimed in every county in Latin, French, and English.² 'In July, 1259, Hugh Bigod, the high justiciary, and two others, commenced the circuit of England, dispensing justice to all men according to their deserts.' For a time the reforming barons were so powerful that they resisted the return of the Earl of Cornwall, the elected King of the Romans, until soon after his landing he engaged on oath to assist in expelling all disturbers of the realm. Some of the barons strove to engross undue shares of the revenue, and disputes took place between De Montfort and the Earl of Gloucester. In 1261 the king obtained a Papal Bull to nullify the Provisions of Oxford, and, after raising an army of mercenaries, attempted to expel the judicial officers lately appointed.

It appears that before this time, on one or two special occasions, the counties had been invited to send knights to the as-

¹ 'Quarterly Review,' No. 237, p. 48. The 'annalist of Burton' calls the council held at Oxford a parliament; and the term is frequently used in the annals of the latter part of this reign, although not 'officially adopted' till 1275.

² 'The Barons' War,' by W. H. Blaauw, p. 68. The modern vindicator of 'the greatest of the Plantagenets' mentions the circuits of the judges as 'probably the chief benefit conferred by these famous Oxford Provisions;' but 'itinerant judges' were first appointed nearly a century before, under Henry II.

sembly to concur in the adjustment of taxation; the barons now tried the expedient of summoning three knights from every county to meet at St. Albans to consider the state of the realm, and De Montfort, who returned to England after a temporary absence, urged his adherents to insist on the Provisions of Oxford as strenuously as on Magna Charta.

The temporary success of one party during a civil war was frequently closely followed by a reverse, as the military retainers who were dispersed after an engagement could not be easily recalled. In the summer of 1263 the barons triumphed; town after town opened to them, and they advanced to London, where Henry was in the Tower trembling for his own safety. Incapable of resistance, he subscribed the Provisions of Oxford, on condition that Parliament should revise them. And on September 9 they were again solemnly confirmed by the king, by Prince Edward, and by the lords spiritual and temporal. Yet, before the end of autumn, Henry was again at the head of an army, formed in great measure from the ranks of his adversaries. In England at this time, as well as in most other parts of Europe, no regular army was maintained. Hence the resort to mercenary troops, from the Continent; hence the fluctuating forces of the barons, who were properly the defenders of the kingdom. During many months of 1263 the country was devastated by civil war, and the queen was attacked and insulted by the populace of London until she took refuge in the bishop's palace near St. Paul's.

In the earnest desire to accommodate differences which brought such evils on the country, the king and his adversaries agreed to submit to the arbitration of Louis IX. of France, whose character was universally esteemed, and whose moderation in regard to the provinces of France held by the English had increased the general respect. Yet, in spite of his high qualities, impartiality was hardly to be expected in a monarch whose efforts had lately enlarged his own royal power, and who was the brother-in-law of Henry himself. Louis summoned the rival parties to appear before him at Amiens. The King of England obeyed the summons; the Earl of Leicester, who was detained by an accident, sent his attorneys. The award which Louis pronounced, on January 23, 1264, was absolutely against the Provisions of Oxford, which he regarded as an invasion of the royal power, extorted by force, and a mere temporary expedient. The King of England ought, therefore, to regain his castles, nominate whom he pleased to offices of state, and summon parliament *according to his pleasure*. But

this award did not lessen the obligations imposed by *Magna Charta* and other royal concessions.¹

The Pope confirmed the decision of Louis, threatening as usual to excommunicate all who should act against it. But the barons were astounded when they found that by a decision restoring to the king unlimited direction over his castles and the chief offices of state, they were again exposed to that ascendancy of foreigners which had been his great offence. They declared that they had not intended to take the judgment of Louis on that point, but concerning other regulations made at Oxford. They strove to bring Henry to admit this distinction; but disturbances in London, where the people had destroyed the palaces of the Earl of Cornwall, rekindled civil war.

In May a sanguinary battle was fought at Lewes, in Sussex, the Earl of Leicester being the successful leader. About 5,000 men are said to have fallen on each side; King Henry and his brother were both made prisoners, and Prince Edward shortly afterwards was detained as a hostage.² The parliament, which assembled on June 23, including four knights for each county, sanctioned the acts of De Montfort. But the cause of the captive monarch was ardently supported on the Continent. Adventurers from all parts of France flocked to Flanders, where the Queen of England set up the royal standard; and so great was the danger of foreign invasion, that Leicester summoned the whole military force of the nation to the camp at Barham Downs, himself taking command of the fleet in the Channel. As usual on such occasions, the winds were adverse, and this danger passed away. The threats of the Pope were equally without effect. Excommunications against all who held the king a prisoner were already sent out; but the papal legate feared to land in England, and compromised the matter by desiring four English bishops to meet him at Boulogne. The bishops, having first obtained permission from the barons to cross the sea, received from the legate the dreaded papers, but willingly allowed them to be destroyed at Dover by the officers

¹ The award was the immediate occasion of the appeal to arms. Prince Edward, who had before supported the barons, opposed them when they refused to reinstate his father in the possession of his castles; and the Earl of Cornwall, who had granted De Montfort a measure of support, now took the king's side, which brought on him the rage of the citizens of London.

² According to some accounts, Prince Edward was taken prisoner with his father at the battle of Lewes; Lingard states on the other hand that he was, after the engagement, received as a hostage for the king, who was not, however, allowed to be at liberty. De Montfort, without consulting Henry, affixed the royal seal to every order.—Lingard, iii. 139.

on duty.¹ Leicester's great object was now to confirm his authority by parliamentary sanction. Among the nobles there was division, many looking upon him with jealousy, but in London and other cities he was esteemed as the defender of popular rights. He was also regarded as the champion of the English Church against foreign interference; and, in spite of the excommunication prepared for him, many preachers enlarged in his praise, and exhorted their hearers to stand by the 'patron of the poor.' It was, says a modern writer, 'not simply the expedient of a revolutionary chief in difficulties, but the expression of a settled policy, when, in December, 1264, he issued in the king's name the ever memorable writs which summoned the first complete parliament that ever met in England.'²

Knights had been previously summoned by De Montfort's influence to meet the earls, barons, and bishops of the realm. On this occasion the deans of cathedrals and an unprecedented number of abbots and priors received the call, and with them came, not only two knights from each shire, but also, for the first time, two citizens or burgesses from every city or borough town.

The act of parliament which confirmed the charters, and granted indemnity to the Earl of Leicester and his associates, was enacted 'by common consent of the king, prelates, earls, barons, and commonalty of the realm.' De Montfort was appointed the justiciary, and was thus by position, as he had been before in power, the first subject in the realm.³

But while the king and the heir-apparent were under restraint, the government was not constitutional. Negotiations were carried on for the release of Prince Edward, and in May he escaped from custody by the aid of the Earl of Gloucester, who, with others, withdrew from De Montfort. A Royalist rising then took place; Edward obtained a success on the borders of Wales, and surprised the garrison of Kenilworth Castle, which was the property of De Montfort, and was under the command of Simon, his second son.

¹ Lingard, iii. 142; Dr. Hook, iii. 295. 'The bishops,' says Dr. Hook, 'were known to be hearty in the national cause.'

² 'Quarterly Review,' No. 237, p. 55. This article is ascribed to Dr. Shirley by Mr. Arthur Mitman in his little work 'English and Scotch Ballads.' This writer clearly acknowledges the 'unhappy necessity' which caused De Montfort to hold the king a prisoner. Until the king was at liberty no treaty could be valid, yet to release the king was fatal to the cause.

³ 'Quarterly Review,' No. 237, p. 55. De Montfort was, in fact, dictator, and not a subject. At Christmas, 1264, both the king and Prince Edward were at his festival at Kenilworth, ostensibly as his guests, but in reality his prisoners, and a hundred and sixty knights partook of the festivities.—See 'The Greatest of the Plantagenets,' p. 65.

On August 4, the great earl fought his last battle at Evesham. With a despairing heart he beheld from the convent tower the advance of Edward's host. On that fatal day, De Montfort and his eldest son fell in battle, fighting to the last, as did also Despencer, the late justiciary, Lord Basset, and many of less renown. A like fate might have attended the old king, who had been compelled to appear in the earl's ranks, had he not cried out to the antagonist by whom he was slightly wounded, 'Hold, fellow; I am Harry of Winchester!' On hearing his father's voice, Prince Edward sprang forward to his rescue. The sceptre was again placed in Henry's feeble hands; but the rigorous judgment pronounced by the Royalist Parliament which met at Winchester, annulling all the acts lately passed, and ordering the confiscation of all the property of Leicester and his adherents, aroused renewed resistance, which took Prince Edward two years to overcome.¹ Banditti, commanded by an outlaw named Adam Gordon, ravaged Hampshire and Berkshire. That leader was renowned for bodily strength, a quality still viewed in England as an attribute of the heroic character. Even Prince Edward did not disdain single combat with Gordon, after which, being victorious, he granted him full pardon.

A committee of twelve prelates and barons were entrusted with the task of adjudging the penalties of Leicester's adherents; their award was called the 'dictum of Kenilworth.' Permission was given to redeem the forfeited estates by heavy fines. The garrison of Kenilworth was subdued by famine; and the outlaws, who for some months continued to resist authority in the Isle of Ely, were at last reduced, after the construction of bridges and roads across the marshes at the expense of the Church, under sanction of the Pope.²

Although the remains of De Montfort had been treated with barbarous ignominy on the field of battle, his English countrymen were to his memory 'more than just,' for they awarded him the honours not only of a statesman, but of a saint and martyr. No Englishman except St. Thomas, of Canterbury, ever received such enthusiastic admiration. Mr. Arthur Milman has rendered into modern English a ballad translated from the Norman French, 'one among many contemporary tributes to

¹ Lord Campbell praises Prince Edward's clemency after the victory of Evesham. 'No blood was shed on the scaffold, and all who submitted were pardoned.' Prince Edward attended the funeral of De Montfort, his son, and Despencer in Evesham Church, and himself wrote a letter to his aunt, Eleanor, the wife of Simon de Montfort, who afterwards became a nun. On Edward's accession, he restored her pension as Countess of Pembroke.—'Greatest of the Plantagenets,' 76.

² Lingard, iii. 153.

the reverence and love with which De Montfort was regarded.' His bold experiment of introducing the popular voice into the great council of the nation was adopted by the sagacity of Edward I. Soon after the battle of Evesham, the legate who came to England allured Prince Edward and his cousin Henry to enlist in a new crusade to Palestine, in which they prudently required that the factious Earl of Gloucester should bear them company.

Before the end of the year, however, the king's declining health rendered Edward's presence desirable. Henry III. expired at Westminster in November, 1272, and was interred in the Abbey, in the completion and decoration of which he had taken so warm an interest. Dating from his accession at ten years of age, his reign had lasted fifty-six years; his son Edward, although absent, was immediately proclaimed King of England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine. So weak, insincere, and pusillanimous a character as Henry's must be dismissed from history as 'worthless,' as the judicious Hallam describes it.¹ He might have gained approval for a refined taste in the arts, had he not been totally unprincipled in the exactions to which it led him. He plundered various abbeys in order to embellish Westminster, but resumed the jewels which he had bestowed upon it, and pawned them. He was so desirous of improving his numerous palaces, that he issued more than twenty warrants for the sheriffs to *impress* painters, masons, and other workmen. He made use of the itinerant justices to collect fines and sell pardons to offenders. It was common on particular occasions for presents to be sent to the king, and Henry claimed the usage as a right. But the era deserves especial commemoration when the great baronial council expanded into a representative parliament. Henry's rapacity might have been in a measure excused on account of his poverty, had he not squandered his resources by prodigal gifts to foreigners, by continued wars with France, and by ambitious projects for his sons. Supplies were continually granted him on promises of redress for grievances—promises which then remained unredeemed. But no victory enabled him to shake off the obligations of the great charter.

For some time after De Montfort's death, tales were told of miracles wrought upon his tomb. In after years, when popular feeling was no longer overawed, 'he was called Sir Simon the Righteous.'²

¹ Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 111.

² See a passage quoted by Mr. Longman from Sir James Mackintosh.—'Lectures on the History of England,' 228.

The scanty records which make it difficult to trace all the changes of this revolutionary period have also left in much obscurity the origin and circumstances of the most famous hero of English ballad poetry. It was after the battle of Evesham that Robin Hood, according to some accounts, fixed himself in Sherwood Forest, where he continued for many years to live a predatory life with his retainers, killing deer and making free with the purses of rich travellers, but maintaining a good character for humanity in regard to women and the poor. Sir Walter Scott, on the other hand, introduced Robin Hood into his romance of 'Ivanhoe,' as a contemporary of Cœur de Lion. According to some, Robin died in the year 1247, at a great age. The uncertain state of the country during what is termed the 'barons' war' would make it more probable that Robin and his gang might at that time escape the surveillance of the law; and the soreness with which the lower ranks regarded the strict maintenance of forest boundaries would help to make a hero of such a marauder.¹ Robin's fame endured for at least three centuries, and 'Robin Hood's day' was a popular festival in the time of Bishop Latimer.

The time was favourable to the acquisition of popular privileges. A charter has been preserved by which Henry III. released the natives of the village of Coltishall, in Norfolk, for ever from villeinage or servitude. This charter was granted on the payment of an aid of twenty shillings to knight the king's eldest son, besides a quit-rent of six shillings a year. The king's motive was to raise money, but the villagers showed how much they valued their charter of freedom by obtaining its renewal from Henry IV. and Henry VI., and again in 1462 from Edward IV. The desire of successive generations to renew it shows how slowly in country parishes servitude became extinct.²

Trial by ordeal was abolished at the beginning of this reign; but the judges were perplexed to find a new mode of examination, and in cases of strong presumption of guilt, if the accused person refused to plead before a jury, he was sent back to prison, where many perished from close confinement.

The scarcity caused by unproductive harvests at times much increased the general discontent. In the year 1258 wheat was sold at 9s. the quarter, or nine times the price which it yielded only a short time before. There was no free exchange between the

¹ Mr. Burton speaks of the 'fine Saxon spirit depicted in these rovers, who, although breaking the laws, were full of courtesy and kindliness, and distributed the slain deer to all in need.'—'History of Scotland,' ii. 156.

² Hallam, ii. 312; and Stark's 'Rivers of Norfolk.'

different parts of Europe; and when wheat was cheap, the farmer had no market; when it was dear, the scarcity was so great that he could scarcely keep sufficient seed for sowing. But commerce was increasing and bringing wealth, and at this time we first hear of coal. In 1239, Henry granted a charter to dig coal to the inhabitants of Newcastle, and thirty-six years afterwards Newcastle was found to have doubled its wealth and importance.

The learning of a few monks, and the good purposes to which their wealth and leisure were sometimes applied, had not prevented an increasing disesteem for those who were considered to lead an indolent life behind monastic walls.

In the thirteenth century the head of the Romish Church founded the order of mendicant friars, devoted to poverty, manual labour, and study; and their preaching was so highly approved by the people, who flocked around them in the streets, that complaints were made that the parish churches were deserted.¹ At a period when the knowledge of a little geometry and mechanics was only found among the clergy, any youth who wished to devote himself to science was sure to enter some monastic order.

Roger Bacon, who was born at Ilchester about the year 1214, may be said to have lived from the time of the interdict under John to the commencement of Edward's interference in the Scottish government. Educated first at Oxford and then at Paris, at twenty-five years of age, when he returned to Oxford, he became a Franciscan friar; deviating, however, from the strict rule of poverty and manual labour, for the sake of his favourite scientific experiments, for which his friend, Bishop Grosesteste, of Lincoln, gave him pecuniary aid. According to his own account, Bacon expended in the construction of the first burning-glass sixty pounds of Paris money, or £20 sterling.²

His course of experiments was so unusual as to excite much suspicion and disapprobation, and it was alleged that his mathematical studies were allied to the magical arts condemned by the Church. Bacon was forbidden to read lectures to the young students, and even to disseminate his writings, except by sending them to the Pope.

Clement IV., 'one of the wisest and worthiest men who had for many years been raised to the papal dignity,' wrote to request a copy of all his works. But after the death of Clement, Bacon

¹ Hallam, ii. 6.

² Thus showing that the French livre was then worth 6s. 8d., although since reduced to 10d. Article 'Bacon,' in 'Biographia Britannica.'

was exposed to renewed persecution from the head of his order. He was summoned to Paris, where his writings were condemned, and he was imprisoned in an apartment of the monastery, restricted in his food, and deprived of the pleasures of conversation and of experimental research. He still continued, however, to study and to write, and at length, after an imprisonment of more than ten years, through the intercession of powerful friends, he regained his liberty. He is said to have died at Oxford, about the year 1294, at the age of eighty. The manuscripts which he left at Oxford were secreted by the timid members of his order, and have partly perished. 'The tone of his writings,' says Hallam, 'was nearly as much above the ordinary standard as were his almost prophetic gleams of the future course of science.' He is believed to have understood the nature of gunpowder, but not to have revealed the method of its manufacture, which was not generally known till nearly a century later. Yet on some subjects he shared the general credulity, believing in alchemy, the pretended art of turning the baser metals into the precious, by which gold was to be made from lead, and silver from copper. He also believed in the possibility of discovering some elixir which would add greatly to the length of life. It is extraordinary how much real gold was wasted, and how much precious time squandered in these fruitless attempts. But possibly, at a time when little respect was paid to philosophy, the name of Friar Bacon might not have been transmitted to posterity had it not been for his fame as a magician, and had not the alchemists both of England and the Continent preserved the fruits of his learning. His works were, like all other learned books at that time, written in Latin.

Roger Bacon died about thirty years before the birth of Wyclif. Both were precursors; the first in experimental philosophy, the second in theology. Both broke the rules of university routine; both might have suffered still more severely in a later age.¹

¹ See for Roger Bacon. Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 490, note; Hallam's 'History of Literature;' and the 'Biographia Britannica.'

CHAPTER XIII.

EDWARD I.

A.D. 1272-1307.

EDWARD has been called the first *English* king who ascended the throne after the Norman Conquest. During the past two hundred years England's kings had all been Normans and Angevins, who spent their time chiefly on the Continent. In Edward, born at Westminster in 1239, 'the line of English kings begins once more,' and under his rule the reign of law was established.

At John's accession, says Lord Macaulay, 'the distinction between Saxons and Normans was strongly marked; before the end of the reign of his grandson it had almost disappeared.' Edward was that grandson.¹ At the time of Henry's death, Edward had just reached the Crusaders' camp at Acre. But no interruption of the peace took place in England owing to his absence. On the day of Henry's funeral the chief men in the realm swore fealty to Edward, and three guardians of the kingdom were appointed to conduct the government until his return. The death of Louis IX., the sainted King of France, at Tunis, had discouraged the Crusaders, and little opportunity appears to have been given Edward to exhibit such deeds of valour as were expected from the great-nephew of Cœur de Lion. Edward was indeed in danger of dying without glory from a wound inflicted by the poisoned dagger of an assassin.² An English surgeon effected his cure, and he began his homeward journey, not hearing of his father's death until he arrived in Italy. A great danger was prepared for him in Burgundy, where the Count de Châlons treacherously invited him to take part in a grand tournament. It was rumoured that mischief

¹ See Mr. Freeman's observations towards the end of vol. iii. of 'History of the Norman Conquest;' 'The Greatest of the Plantagenets;' and Macaulay, i. 16.

² The story that Edward's devoted wife Eleanor sucked the poison from the wound is generally discarded.

was designed, and the Pope wrote to caution Edward against joining in a feat of arms unsuited to his royal dignity; but the king was not to be dissuaded. Many of the English nobility went out to meet their sovereign, and the proposed trial of skill became a very serious encounter. The Count de Châlons, who possessed great strength, threw his arms round Edward; upon which Edward's horse sprang forward, and the count was thrown. When raised by his friends he craved quarter, which Edward refused personally to grant, but allowed him to receive from a less noble champion. The prize of valour was gained by the English after a very sanguinary contest.¹

Having done homage to King Philip at Paris, Edward stayed to negotiate with Flanders. Differences between the English and Flemish rulers had occasioned seizures of manufactured goods, and the consequent prohibition of the export of wool from England occasioned much distress. Edward invited the advice of English merchants, and the commercial intercourse between the countries was restored.

It was not until August 2, 1274, nearly two years after Henry's death, that Edward and Eleanor were crowned at Westminster.

Among those summoned on this occasion were the Kings of Scotland and Wales. Llewellyn failed to appear. Alexander attended, but he did homage to Edward only for his English lands.

In the year 1260 a Scottish princess, daughter of Alexander and Margaret, had been born at the court of Henry III. Three years later, a Norwegian attempt to seize the western isles of Scotland was defeated, but Orkney and Shetland were under Norwegian rule; and in 1281 the Princess Margaret, heiress of Scotland, was married to Eric of Norway.

The wars which Edward afterwards conducted in Wales and Scotland have engrossed so much attention, that too little notice has frequently been taken of the peaceful legislation by which he improved the laws and condition of England.

During the late reign Edward had been at one time favourable to the popular cause, and, although afterwards the opponent of De Montfort, had openly expressed displeasure when his father violated the Provisions of Oxford. The arrest of Edward himself after the battle of Lewes was not likely to reconcile him with the king's adversaries. He appears, however, to have felt that the best way to prevent sedition was to remove the grievances which led to it.

¹ Lingard, iii. 186.

A parliament was summoned to meet the succeeding Easter, in which representatives of 'the Commonalty' were included, and the preamble of the acts declared that the king desired to reform the evil state of the realm, 'the laws having been less observed, peace less kept, and offenders less punished than they ought to be.'¹

One enactment restrained the tyranny still exercised by barons, who, having armed retainers and strong castles, frequently carried off their neighbours' cattle and refused payment. In such cases it was decreed that the king might order the destruction of the castle. When the nobility committed spoliation, we cannot wonder at the popularity of Robin Hood. A severe law was passed against the Jews for lending money at high interest, usury being accounted criminal, although loans ought to be open to free adjustment. Jews were compelled to wear badges for the sake of distinction. Some years afterwards, in 1290, some of them were executed for clipping the coin, and the rest were banished. It was commanded by parliament that elections should be free, and uncontrolled by force or menace, and that sheriffs, coroners, and other legal officers should be chosen by the people.²

Llewellyn of Wales, when summoned by the parliament, again failed to attend; and when Edward was shortly afterwards at Chester, on a progress through part of his dominions, he summoned the Welsh king for the third time. But Llewellyn not only declined to present himself, he also ravaged the borders.

It was not until the end of June, 1277, that Edward, after much preparation, left Chester with the determination to bring him to obedience. North Wales was protected by so dense a forest that the troops were obliged to cut their way through it. The Welsh retreated to the mountainous districts round Snowdon, and in a few weeks Llewellyn was obliged to sue for peace. He was required to give up the greater part of Wales, to pay a large sum, and to do homage for Anglesey, which he was allowed to retain; but Edward afterwards softened the conditions, remitted the fine, and consented to Llewellyn's marriage with Eleanor de Montfort, who had become a captive in England the year before. The Welsh king and his bride,

¹ The commonalty was partially represented even in this, Edward's first parliament, but much more fully in that of 1295. See 'Greatest of the Plantagenets,' pp. 100 and 215.

² This 'Statute of Westminster,' says Lord Campbell, 'deserves the name of a Code, rather than of an Act of Parliament. Its object was to correct abuses, and remodel the administration of justice.'

according to the chroniclers, kept Christmas at Westminster in 1278, 'with great jollity.' In the next year Edward and his queen went to France, where Eleanor did homage to Philip for her inheritance, the earldom of Ponthieu, and Edward for Aquitaine.¹

The Welsh prince's sole chance of safety lay in keeping the terms imposed by a king who, although strong, had not been ungenerous. But the introduction of English law into the districts ceded to Edward was unpopular. David, brother of the Welsh king, thought it a grievance that a road was made through one of his forests, and that some of his vassals were executed for murder; he surprised Hawarden Castle in the darkness of night, carried the justiciary to the top of Snowdon, and put the rest of the garrison to death. A general insurrection followed, in which Llewellyn joined his brother. Edward, roused to action, summoned a council of the nobility to meet him at Worcester, but deputed the Archbishop of Canterbury to offer terms of peace before entering Wales with his army. The complaint of the Welsh was of the introduction of English law.

Edward's condition was absolute submission, with promise of a handsome pension to Llewellyn. Recourse was then had to arms, and Edward again subdued the Isle of Anglesey, and threw a bridge of boats across the Menai Strait; but the bridge was carried away before all the English soldiers had crossed, and great numbers were cut off and killed by the Welsh. Llewellyn was slain, and his head sent to London as a trophy of victory; David was taken prisoner some months afterwards, and tried 'by the whole baronage of England,' convened at Shrewsbury in October, 1283. Edward, accusing him of treachery and ingratitude, left his fate to the decision of parliament. The parliament condemned David to death as a traitor, and his execution is said to have been the only cruel punishment inflicted on any of the Welsh insurgents.

A letter is extant from Edward, in the next month of this year, to the prior of Alvingham, wishing to provide for the children of Llewellyn and David of Wales, as, although their 'perfidy' was 'fresh in the memory of all,' the innocent should not pay the penalties of their parents' crimes. Edward spent a considerable time in settling the affairs of Wales, not only fortifying the castles of Conway and Caernarvon, and placing the lands adjoining under powerful English barons, but with a

¹ Ponthieu was an earldom forming part of the ancient province of Picardy, which was not united to the kingdom of France till nearly a hundred years after this time.

view to conciliate the Welsh. Accordingly he appointed the Bishop of St. David's and others a commission of inquiry into the old laws and usages, on which he founded the 'Statutes of Wales,' introducing as much of the English laws as appeared compatible with Welsh prejudices. In 1283 Queen Eleanor held her court in Rhuddlan Castle, in Flintshire; next year she removed to Caernarvon, where, in April, 1284, her son Edward was born, who was named Prince of Wales, a title since then appropriated to the King's eldest son.¹

Edward's chief counsellor in the improvement of Wales was Burnel, his chancellor, the Bishop of Bath and Wells. Among the beneficial enactments for England, a prominent place is given to the law of mortmain, passed in 1279, which put a check on the absorption of landed property by the Church. Lands bequeathed or purchased for monasteries fulfilled no feudal obligations, but were lost for all purposes of national service, being held, according to the legal phrase, 'in a dead hand.' A clause of Magna Charta had indeed already restrained gifts to religious houses unless the lord of the fee consented.²

In the summer of 1286, Edward went to France with the queen and a splendid train of bishops and nobles, where he was honourably welcomed by King Philip. On his return to England after three years abroad he found great disorder prevailing. Outlaws lurked in the forests who waylaid travellers, and even the judges were corrupt, and sometimes known to accept bribes for the release of great criminals. Edward, at the suggestion of his chancellor, published a proclamation inviting all persons aggrieved to appear before parliament. The charges were substantiated against nearly all the judges, and heavy fines were imposed.

The greatest of all the delinquents, Weyland, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, fled to the sanctuary of St. Edmund's Bury. The king sent a knight with a guard, not to violate the sanctuary, but to prevent the admission of provisions. After two months Weyland submitted, and petitioned for leave to quit the realm. He walked barefoot and bareheaded to the coast, and was immediately transported.³ The statute of Winchester directed that underwood should be removed to the

¹ Lingard, iii. 196; and 'The Greatest of the Plantagenets,' p. 135. The popular story of the massacre of the Welsh bards by Edward's order is universally discredited; and would be forgotten were it not the subject of Gray's Ode.

² Hallam, ii. 26. Even St. Louis inserted a regulation of this kind in his code. When the king had no standing army, the national arm would have been 'palsied by the diminution of military nobles.'

³ Lord Campbell's 'Lives of the Chancellors,' vol. i.; Lingard, iii. 270, nota.

distance of two hundred feet on each side of the public roads, that shelter might not be given to robbers, and established a nightly watch in all towns. All classes then wore arms, and by this statute the arms of every person were prescribed according to his degree, bows and arrows being the fitting weapons of those below forty-shilling freeholders.

The bow was the peculiar weapon of the English, and archery was encouraged on Sundays and holidays. While the youth of the village were thus engaged on the green, those of higher rank were amusing themselves with feats of arms in the tilt-yard of the castle.¹

The sudden death of Alexander III. of Scotland, Edward's brother-in-law, in 1286, left the succession to his grandchild, three years of age, the daughter of Margaret, Queen of Norway, who died about three years before her father. The Scottish estates upon this asked the advice of the King of England, who was in Gascony, and he advised them to choose a regency, and to carry on the government in the name of the young queen. In November, 1289, agreeably to his suggestion, four commissioners from Scotland, and envoys from Norway, met Edward and his counsellors at Salisbury. To them Edward made known his plan, that his son the Prince of Wales and the little 'Maid of Norway' should be married when of suitable age, and that Scotland should be under the joint protection of England and Norway. No objection was made to this proposal, which was accepted by a solemn treaty at a council of the clergy, nobility, and community of Scotland, assembled in July, 1290, at Brigham, near Berwick. At the same time it was declared that the laws and liberties of Scotland must remain inviolate; that Scotland should continue a separate kingdom; that no vassal of the crown should be required to cross the Scottish frontier to pay homage to a sovereign residing in England; that no native of Scotland should be summoned beyond the marches, either to answer in a civil cause or for a crime committed in Scotland; and that the national great seal should be always held by a Scotchman.² These were the necessary stipulations demanded by Scottish caution.

In the autumn of this year, 1290, Queen Eleanor was taken ill when travelling with the king, and died at the end of November at Hardby, near Lincoln. Edward spent ten days accompanying her remains to their place of interment at Westminster, and stopped at every town which was a con-

¹ Froude's 'History of England,' i. 53.

² Burton's 'History of Scotland,' ii. 124.

venient station, to have the body carried to the high altar. Crosses, richly sculptured, were afterwards erected at all these places to her honour.

But two months after these deliberations, in September, 1290, soon after landing in Orkney, the 'Maid of Norway' died. As soon as this came to the ears of Fraser, Bishop of St. Andrew's, one of the regency, he sent a letter to Edward, beseeching the king to approach the border and assist the Scots in their choice of a successor to the throne. Edward, we are told, stood high in Scotland, 'as a powerful and magnanimous neighbour;' but, after so much care had been taken to prevent his claim of feudal superiority, the application appears strange. It was no doubt very welcome to Edward.

Next year, the English barons of the northern counties were summoned to attend their king to Norham, just south of the border, where, at the king's request, the chief candidates for the crown of Scotland appeared with their supporters.

The real contest lay between the claims of John Baliol and Robert Bruce: the first the great-grandson of Earl David, brother of William the Lion; the second, David's grandson, but descending from his second daughter. Both possessed large estates, and Bruce had preferred his claim as devised by Alexander II., fifty years before.¹ The address, which was delivered by the chief justice, Roger Brabazon, set forth that King Edward, touched by the calamities of Scotland, was anxious to do justice to all, and required those present to do him the favour of acknowledging his right to act as superior or overlord. At this demand, the Scots desired time to consult their fellow-prelates and nobles, and three weeks were allowed, after which they again met at Norham, but on Scottish ground. The competitors for the crown all agreed without hesitation in acknowledging Edward as the Lord Superior of Scotland. The humiliation of Baliol which succeeded, and the fame of Bruce's grandson King Robert, have attached to the one name the discredit of this humiliation and to the other the honour of avoiding it; but in this respect they stood alike. Both had large estates in England and in Scotland; both belonged to the English court, and looked on the English king with much respect.

Baliol had a lordship in Normandy, besides large estates

¹ Alexander II. had promised, when without an heir, that Robert Bruce should succeed him; but when that king died in 1249, he was immediately succeeded by his son, eight years old, the child of a second marriage. Bruce revived this claim before the death of the 'Maid of Norway.'—Burton, ii. 84, 118, 217.

in England. The old munificence of his house is attested by Baliol College, Oxford. Edward directed that Baliol and Bruce should each choose forty arbiters, and that he should nominate twenty-four.

He ordered a search for any documents preserved in the Scottish records which could throw light on the succession to the throne. The meetings of the king and the commissioners were repeatedly prorogued, and it was not until November, 1292, that the King of England pronounced judgment before a great assembly in Berwick Castle in favour of Baliol—a decision generally considered correct according to the rule of hereditary descent.¹ The new king, John, signed a statement of homage justly due to the King of England as Lord Superior of Scotland, and was solemnly crowned at Scone on November 30. He had won the prize, regardless of the unhappy fate of a sovereign who was unsupported by the respect of his people; but it is said that he was terrified by the indignation then shown by his subjects. A litigation soon afterwards occurred at Edinburgh, when the vanquished party appealed from John's decision to Edward, who was at Newcastle. In vain John pleaded that the treaty of Brigham had forbidden such an appeal; Edward replied by compelling John to renounce that treaty for himself and his heirs for ever. It was not by a mere form of words that the King of England was Lord Superior of Scotland.

In 1293 a petty quarrel between English and French seamen in Gascony, and a serious attack by English sailors of the Cinque Ports on a French fleet, aroused Philip's anger; commerce between the countries was interrupted, and Edward was cited to appear before the King of France at Paris. A negotiation attempted by Edward proved fruitless; and Philip took possession of Guienne, declaring it forfeited through Edward's misconduct.² To recover this province, Edward, in 1294, prepared a large armament, and appealed to the English clergy for aid. He directed inquiries into the revenues of all the churches and monasteries, and procured from them large sums as loans for present use, also issuing writs for the seizure of the wool and tanned hides prepared for exportation, for which he gave the owners 'tallies,' or receipts of a simple kind. But by this arbitrary proceeding he caused much discontent, and roused formidable opposition amongst the nobility and clergy.

¹ Burton, ii. 249.

² This province is called in the history of this age indiscriminately Guienne and Gascony.

In November, 1295, he resorted to the prudent measure of summoning the first complete English parliament. The assembly summoned by De Montfort thirty years before could not be called legal when both the king and his son were absent and in custody.

A rising in Wales had been lately subdued by Edward in person, and fresh hostilities were threatening in Scotland, when he ordered writs of summons to be sent not only to the nobles, prelates, and knights, or lesser barons, but to the sheriffs of about one hundred and twenty towns, in order that two knights should be elected for each county, and two burgesses for each town. The announcement declared that by 'the rule of justice, that which concerns all should be by all approved;' and thus for the first time the lower members of the community were invited by their sovereign 'to provide against the dangers which threatened the kingdom.' The townsmen were more liberal in their grant than the higher orders, voting to the king a seventh, while the barons offered but an eleventh. Edward sent troops to Bayonne under the command of his brother,¹ the Earl of Lancaster, and soon learnt that the ruling faction of Scotland had invaded Cumberland, ravaging the country with great ferocity in league with the King of France. Only three years and three months had passed since Baliol pledged himself as Edward's liegeman; he was no longer now a free agent. The king summoned Berwick to surrender, and on refusal, ordered his fleet to enter the harbour while he assaulted the walls.

Three of his ships fell into the hands of the garrison, who put the crews to the sword. Edward soon took the place by storm, and such vengeance followed as degraded Berwick to the state of a common market town.

While still there, Edward received a written renunciation of vassalage, which the Scots had required from their unfortunate king. His anger was much excited. 'The foolish traitor,' Edward is said to have exclaimed, 'if he will not come to me, I must go to him.' On June 14 the King of England reached Edinburgh, and after a short stay at Holyrood continued a triumphant progress. At Brechin the hapless John presented himself in abject submission, and was formally degraded from his high office. No cruel punishment awaited him. He was sent to England, and the Tower of London was assigned him as a residence, with the liberty of free range within twenty miles; from which restraint, moreover, he was delivered by the

¹ 'Greatest of the Plantagenets,' 216; Macaulay's 'History of England,' i. 17.

Pope's intervention after about three years, and was allowed to retire to his estates in Normandy.

Edward confided the administration of Scotland to Warrenne, Earl of Surrey, whom he appointed Guardian, with Hugh of Cressingham as treasurer, and Ormsby as justiciary. Many of the oldest castles remaining in Scotland were probably built at this time. 'The Stone of Destiny,' which was enshrined in the chair in which the kings of Scotland were crowned at Scone, and which had been called the Scottish Palladium, was removed by Edward to Westminster Abbey, to be enclosed in the coronation chair of England.

When, after Baliol's deposition, Edward traversed Scotland, every sword was sheathed, every knee bent before him as Lord of Scotland, and when he summoned a parliament at Berwick he received ample homage from the Scottish barons, prelates, and representatives of towns.¹ The king's great object appeared now attained, and Scotland to be united with England under one government; but the year 1297 brought a series of difficulties. The demands upon the funds of the clergy had induced Winchelsey, the primate, to appeal to Pope Boniface for protection; and on the king's next call for money, the archbishop produced a mandate from the Pope forbidding the English clergy to grant to laymen any part of their revenues, without papal permission. This Bull, sealing up those treasures on which he had relied, excited Edward's strongest indignation. That the Pope should claim this power over any of his subjects was to him arrogance not to be endured; and he replied by declaring that if the English clergy were no longer to bear their share of the public burden, they should cease to enjoy his protection. After consultation with the nobles, Edward issued a decree of outlawry against the clergy, and caused the chief justice, Sir John Metingham, to announce that they were out of the protection of the king's court. This despotic act, without precedent in England, soon induced the greater part of the wealthy dignitaries to sue for the king's pardon and protection, in spite of the denunciation of the primate.

But it was not from the clergy alone that Edward met with obstruction. Determination to protect the liberty of the subject was general in England after the enactment of Magna Charta; and Edward's careful legislation did not prevent some of his barons from checking in a very hostile spirit any royal act which invalidated the charters to which he had agreed.

¹ Sir Walter Scott states that most of the noble families of Scotland find the names of their ancestors on 'the degrading roll of submission.'—'History of Scotland,' i. 67.

It was difficult to send an army sufficiently powerful to re-conquer Gascony, and Edward entered on an alliance with the Earl of Flanders to attack the north-eastern frontier of France. But, when, in the spring of this year, he called upon Bohun, Earl of Hereford, the chief constable, and Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, the Marshal of England, to accompany his forces to the Continent, both of these noblemen refused, alleging that, although bound to attend the king personally, they were not legally obliged to undertake foreign campaigns. Highly irritated, Edward is said to have told Bigod that he should 'either go or hang.' To which threat Bigod replied with a declaration that he would 'neither go nor hang,' and the two earls immediately left the assembly, which was held at Salisbury, followed by thirty bannerets and fifteen hundred knights.

Edward saw the necessity of taking a public step to stop disaffection before departing for foreign war. Having effected a reconciliation with Archbishop Winchelsey, he appeared before a large assembly on July 14 at Westminster Hall, and, standing on a platform with his son, then in his fourteenth year, beside the primate and several noblemen, the king condescended to apologise for his past conduct, owning that the burdens laid on the people were heavy, but they had been requisite to preserve England from foreign incursions. 'And now,' said Edward, 'I am going to expose myself to danger for you. If I return, receive me again, and I will make you full amends; if I fall, here is my son; place him on the throne, and his gratitude will reward your fidelity.' As the king ended this address, both he and the archbishop shed tears, and shouts of loyalty from the crowd testified the general attachment of the people. To disarm further hostility, Edward, when ready to embark, addressed letters to the heads of every county, declaring that he had never refused any petition for the redress of grievances, and promising to confirm the great charters in return for the liberal aid which the council had just granted him. But his efforts came too late to prevent a remonstrance on the part of the two earls and their adherents. This was delivered into his hands just before his embarkation, and repeated their reasons for not accompanying his expedition, renewing complaints of requisitious and of violations of Magna Charta and the Charter of Forests.

To this appeal Edward returned a temperate answer. Part of his council had already embarked, and he at last set sail for Flanders on August 22. His departure had been long retarded, and the expedition proved fruitless. A truce was agreed

upon in November to last for two years, and Edward appointed a Parliament to meet at York in the next January. But before that time arrived, two victories had been gained by the king's adversaries.

News of troubles in Scotland had reached the king before he left England, and he had desired the regents to repress disorders without delay. Little is known concerning the early life of William Wallace, who in the year 1297 appeared in Scotland as a military adventurer with a small band of followers, and soon taught the Scots that it was possible to make head against the English. Baliol had been displaced, nevertheless Wallace called himself the officer of King John. The Robert Bruce who had claimed the crown of Scotland was dead; his son, the Earl of Carrick, was consistently faithful to Edward; and the grandson of Baliol's competitor was trained at Edward's court as an Anglo-Norman baron.¹

Sir William Douglas, late governor of Berwick, who was pardoned by Edward after the capitulation, joined Wallace, and the insurgents gradually gained ground. Wallace was besieging the castle of Dunbar when he was apprised that Surrey and Cressingham, the regents of Scotland, were approaching Stirling, the great pass between the North and South of Scotland, on which he instantly determined to contest their progress. He obtained a complete victory; Cressingham was killed, and Surrey retired to Berwick. After this victory, the Scots invaded and wasted England, and Wallace was styled Guardian of Scotland.

The English council of regency summoned Parliament; but to the Earls of Norfolk and Hereford the opportunity of enforcing fresh guarantees for liberty appeared more important even than the defence of the border. Two days only after Edward left England, they rode to London to warn the council that the grant just made was illegal, inasmuch as they and their friends had not sanctioned it.² Hitherto, we are told, 'the king's prerogative of levying money, by name of tallage, from his towns or tenants in demesne had passed unquestioned;' but on October 10, 1297, when the existing charters were confirmed, fresh clauses were added, prohibiting such tallages from being levied without the assent of all orders in Parliament, beginning with the archbishop and ending with the words 'burgesses and other freemen.' No officer should seize in the king's name on corn, wool, or other goods, without the owner's consent. Another order followed stipulating that no ill-will should be borne

¹ Burton, ii. 345.

² Lingard, iii. 262.

towards the two earls for any past offences. These acts were signed by the young prince; an aid in money was voted; and the statutes were sent over to Edward, who signed them within three days, some say with a reluctant hand. 'This was perhaps,' says Lingard, 'the most important victory which had hitherto been gained over the crown. By investing the people with the sole right of raising the supplies, it armed them with the powers of checking the extravagance and controlling the despotism of their monarchs.'¹

When Edward returned to England in March, 1298, he took immediate steps to disarm hostility by promising full amends for any seizures made by his purveyors in preparation for the war. He then marched into Scotland to the Forth, with 80,000 foot and 8,000 horse, consisting chiefly of Welsh and Irish soldiers. He met with no enemy, but soon discovered that Wallace, with his army, lay in the forest of Falkirk, prepared to intercept his retreat. In this position he retired upon Linlithgow for the night, which he passed with his troops upon the bare heath, and next morning found the Scots in battle array behind a morass. For some time their squares of pikemen defied the English attack; but the English archery told upon them severely, and the cavalry then broke and routed them. From twenty to forty thousand Scots were reported slain. Wallace escaped to the forests, a mere wanderer until his capture some years after, but never again was able to head an army. His dispositions were skilful,² yet the defeat of Falkirk was, says Lingard, 'the most disastrous that Scotland ever experienced.'³

The Earls of Hereford and Norfolk were meanwhile steadfast in their determination that the Scottish war should not postpone the ratification of those charters to which the king had pledged his word. In the spring of 1299, Edward summoned the citizens of London to St. Paul's to hear the new confirmations of the charters, which were listened to with shouts of approval; but on hearing the equivocating clause which had been added, 'saving the rights of the Crown,' expressions of discontent and anger were so decided that Edward took the prudent course of summoning a new Parliament, and granted the demands without reservation. 'The famous statute, inade-

¹ Lingard, iii. 265.

² 'Wallace drew up his spearmen in four hollow circles or squares, the outer ranks kneeling, and the whole supported by bowmen within; it was the formation of Waterloo.'—Mr. Green's 'History,' p. 186.

³ Lingard, iii. 241.

quately denominated the Confirmation of the Charters,' is, says Hallam, 'not less important than the Great Charter itself.'¹ It was enacted that the charters should be publicly read in the sheriff's court four times every year, and that three knights should be empowered by the freeholders in every county to punish any one who should violate them.²

At Midsummer, 1300, Edward mustered a large army at Carlisle for another invasion of Scotland. The principal Scottish patriots had endeavoured to obtain the interposition of the King of France and the Pope, and a mandate was sent to Edward through the primate, desiring him to abstain from further attacks on Scotland, which 'did, and doth still, belong in full right to the Church of Rome;' but this interference only served to unite the English barons in support of their sovereign. Edward sent to Rome a laboured statement of his claims to feudal superiority over Scotland. The war was tedious; in 1303, when Stirling Castle capitulated, Edward proved a lenient conqueror, but he earnestly desired the capture of Wallace, the first to instigate what was called 'the War of Independence.' Wallace being taken prisoner, was carried to London, where, after a formal trial, he was condemned to suffer the cruel death of a traitor; his head was placed on London Bridge, and his mutilated remains were sent to Scotland.³ Edward hoped to tranquillise Scotland by peaceful legislation, and intended to add Scottish representatives to the English Parliament. One of the Scotchmen whose advice he sought at this time was Bruce, Earl of Carrick; but the death of that nobleman was followed by a decisive revolution. Early in February, 1306, Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale, the grandson of the claimant of 1291, suddenly disappeared from Edward's court, and it was soon known that he had reached Scotland. The current report was unfavourable to Scotland's favourite hero. The claim of Earl Comyn to the Scottish throne had been nearly equal to that of Bruce. Bruce stopped at Dumfries, and met Comyn in a church, where they conversed, and Bruce is said to have offered Comyn his estates in return for Comyn's aid in securing him the sovereignty. Comyn refused, professing loyalty to King Edward. Bruce then became angry, drew forth his dagger, and Comyn was slain—if not by Bruce, by one of his friends. The crime of sacrilege was thus added to the guilt of murder. Bruce and

¹ 'Middle Ages,' ii. 136, and note.

² In September, 1299, Edward married the Princess Marguerite, sister of the King of France. This second marriage was solemnised in Canterbury Cathedral by the Archbishop.

³ August, 1304.

his associates then attacked the English judges who were holding their court at Dumfries, and drove them over the border. These excesses were not condemned by the fierce people of Scotland, who were but too eager to rise and expel the English.

On March 27, about six weeks after the murder of Comyn, Bruce was installed as King Robert of Scotland in the chapel royal of Scone, notwithstanding that the place had been deprived of its sacred stone and of the Scottish regalia. According to tradition, the right of crowning the King of Scotland devolved upon the head of the clan Macduff, who was a minor, and could not appear. But Macduff's sister, although married to the Earl of Buchan who remained loyal to Edward, set off independently for Scone, and placed a new-made crown on the head of King Robert.

After such provocation, we cannot wonder that Edward issued a very severe ordinance. All persons in arms against the English Government were to be pursued from city to city, from county to county, and those who should refuse to join the pursuers were made liable to forfeiture and imprisonment. Application was made to the Pope for letters of excommunication against Bruce, in consequence of the sacrilege; the letters were sent, but the minds of the Scottish people were too excited to regard them. Although Edward's health was failing, he ordered preparations for a great invasion of Scotland. There was first a grand pageant at Westminster. The Prince of Wales, who was in his twenty-second year, was knighted by the king, and then performed the same ceremony on three hundred young gentlemen, who kept their vigils in the Temple Church. London sympathised with the king's enthusiastic desire that the young chivalry of England should hasten to the conquest of Scotland.

The Earl of Pembroke, who was named the new governor, reached Scotland early in 1306; but the old king was compelled to tarry so often on the journey that he did not arrive at Carlisle till March of the following year. While Edward was preparing for what he hoped might prove his last successful campaign, the new King of Scots wandered an outlaw, eluding the vengeance of Comyn's adherents, and is said to have concealed himself for a time in the desolate isle of Rathlin, on the coast of Ireland. In the early spring he ventured into Scotland, and obtained a victory over the Earl of Pembroke, but his wife and the countess by whose hand he was crowned were taken prisoners. Edward directed that the wife of Bruce should be kindly treated, but ordered severer treatment to Lady Buchan.¹

¹ The common story that by Edward's order the countess was placed in a cage

In July, the king, having somewhat improved in health, fondly hoped that his strength would allow him to lead his troops once more to victory. But the exertion of mounting his horse proved fatal, and he expired at Burgh-on-the-Sands on July 7, in his sixty-ninth year, and the thirty-fifth of his reign.

Before leaving Carlisle he summoned his son to his bed-side, and warned him not to allow his favourite associate Gaveston, whom the king had banished, to return without the consent of Parliament; he likewise ordered that his bones after death should be carried before the troops to the extremity of Scotland. From what we know of the better part of Edward's character, we can believe that he would have experienced far more satisfaction in uniting the two divisions of Great Britain by peaceful legislation than in contemplating signal vengeance. His best intentions had been disappointed, and for three more centuries Scotland remained a thorn in England's side, sending continual raids across the border, and in general alliance with France when France and England were at war. The Scots, in the beginning of the year 1300, attempted to place themselves under the special protection of the Pope, Boniface VIII., 'who sought to establish everywhere a claim as if he had been lord of the manor of Christendom.'¹ To make the best answer to the letter sent by the Pope, Edward summoned a Parliament to meet at Lincoln in 1301, to which he directed the universities to send deputies, and before which the Pope's letter was translated and publicly read. The reply, to which more than a hundred nobles affixed their seals, shows that our ancestors were well able to distinguish between the Pope's spiritual and temporal authority. They declared that the king should not plead before the Pope, with respect to the kingdom of Scotland or any other, nor submit in any way to his judgment; 'we neither can nor ought to permit our lord the king so to do, even if he wished it.' The plain speaking of the barons in this case served the king. Boniface felt that he had gone too far, and left the Scots to fight their own battles.

Edward's last days must have been filled with deep anxiety concerning the son who would inherit his dominions, but who was so unable to carry out his policy. Letters were discovered a few years ago in the chapter-house at Westminster, written

exposed to the eyes of the people, is contradicted by Lingard. What is termed a cage was a cell or room within a turret, and Edward ordered that it should be a decent chamber.—Lingard, iii. 281, note.

¹ Sir Walter Scott's 'History of Scotland,' i. 76.

by Edward Prince of Wales, which show that for a considerable time he was under his father's displeasure on account of his intimacy with Piers Gaveston of Gascony. In 1305 the prince was imprisoned by the king's order, because, in company with this associate, he had riotously broken into the park of Walter Langton, Bishop of Chester, the royal treasurer, and destroyed the deer. Again, in February, 1307, a decree banished Gaveston from the realm, requiring from him a solemn oath that he would not return. Knowing, as Edward I. did, by bitter experience, the danger of his son from weak partiality for this unworthy favourite, he sought to bind him by the most stringent promises to rely on better counsellors.¹

The writer of the historical sketch to which reference has been repeatedly made has collected the testimonies of successive eminent lawyers in praise of the policy of this reign. Sir Edward Coke, writing in the beginning of the seventeenth century, declared that the statutes of Edward I. had been 'more constant and durable laws' than had been since enacted; and Sir Matthew Hale declared that this may be considered 'the true starting of the law of England, which before this king's reign was rude and unpolished,' but has since 'remained without any great alteration.'²

Grievances prohibited by law were not in consequence eradicated, and the rolls of Parliament during the succeeding century still occasionally show their continuance.³ The barons, who knew how to resist the oppression of either the king or the Pope, were not always restrained by equity themselves. In one of the most tyrannical acts of the reign, the expulsion of the Jews, Edward yielded to the importunities of his subjects, but tried to enforce justice towards that unfortunate people by allowing them to carry away their property. Officers were commanded to provide the poor Jews with a free passage, and to protect the rich. But when no longer awed by the king's commands, the seamen in some cases plundered their passengers and threw them overboard, cruelty which Edward afterwards punished as far as possible with death. The Jews thus expelled in 1290 were said to number 16,500, and it was not till 1660 that they were freely allowed a settlement in England.⁴

¹ See extracts from the prince's letters given by the author of 'The Greatest of the Plantagenets,' p. 359; and Appendix L, with references to the chronicles.

² See extracts from Coke, Hale, and Blackstone, given in 'The Greatest of the Plantagenets,' p. 167.

³ Hallam, ii. 173.

⁴ Lingard, iii. 254.



CHAPTER XIV.

EDWARD II.

A.D. 1307-1327.

KING EDWARD I. and his heir parted at Carlisle on one of the early days of July, the prince's presence being required in London. In addition to other commands, the king desired that a large sum from the royal treasury should be devoted to the maintenance of a body of knights in the Holy Land.

On hearing of his father's death, the prince hastened to the border; he received the homage of the English barons at Carlisle, and of several Scottish at Dumfries, then advanced to meet the King of Scotland early in August, at the head of a gallant army, but soon withdrew into England, on the plea that it was needful to prepare for his marriage and coronation.

That the young king should, in defiance of his father's injunction, direct that his remains should be interred in Westminster Abbey, cannot be thought blamable;¹ but nothing can excuse his disobedience to other directions which were just and politic. Gaveston was immediately recalled, and to him was given the money bequeathed for the war in Palestine. Bishop Langton, who had opposed the prodigality of this favourite, was sent to prison, and Edward conferred on Gaveston the earldom and lands of Cornwall, affianced him to his niece, and made him lord chamberlain. When preparing to leave England in January for his marriage with Isabella, daughter of the King of France, Edward appointed Gaveston regent of England; and on his return with his bride, attended by a number of foreign noblemen—when Gaveston appeared in company with the English barons—the superior demonstrations of regard which

¹ The interment took place at Westminster on October 27, the coffin having rested awhile at Waltham Abbey, where were deposited the remains of Harold.—

² Freeman's 'Norman Conquest.'

the king lavished on his favourite kindled fresh resentment in the English nobles.

The coronation took place on February 25, and Gaveston, whom the English regarded as a foreign adventurer, was selected for the honour of carrying the crown before the king. It was impossible for a young sovereign to act with greater imprudence, even in respect of the favourite whom he had thus rendered obnoxious to the highest of his subjects.

The barons petitioned for his immediate banishment; but for a time Gaveston continued to outshine all others by the splendour of his dress and the number of his retinue. In tournaments his skill prevailed over the Earls of Lancaster, Hereford, and other English nobles, and their hatred was much increased by his satirical taunts. At the next Parliament the animosity against him was so strongly expressed that Edward was obliged to assent to his banishment. Gaveston was compelled to swear that he would not return, and the bishops declared that excommunication should follow, if he ventured to violate the oath. Before his departure Edward again bestowed on him lands in England and Guienne, and gave him letters of favour to the Pope and the King of France. Gaveston sailed from England in June; but it was soon found that he had been appointed governor of Ireland, where he displayed the magnificence of a prince. A list which remains of plate and jewels lavished on this favourite, proves Edward's excessive prodigality. 'An aid' was soon required, and the Commons, who, in 1309, formed part of the assembly, made the 'unprecedented demand' of the redress of grievances, stating that, in spite of royal promises, the abuse of purveyors was still existing—provisions of all kinds being seized by the king's officers without payment. The price of wine and of other imports was raised by high duties, the coin was debased, and justice was not administered.¹ Startled by this remonstrance, Edward promised attention to the complaints, and ordered the lords to assemble three months later at Stamford. The rancour of the barons had meanwhile so far abated that Gaveston ventured to return to England in June, 1309. Edward hastened to meet him at Chester, and brought him to the council assembled at Stamford, where permission was given him to reside in England, 'provided he should demean himself properly.' Gaveston's imprudence, however, soon renewed all former hostility.

The barons refused to meet him at a tournament, and brought

¹ Lingard, iii. 287. This remonstrance is called unprecedented, because it was made by the Commons.

their armed retainers to Parliament for protection. Like his grandfather, Henry III., Edward was compelled to sanction the establishment of a committee of seven prelates and fourteen noblemen, who, under the name of 'Ordainers,' undertook for one year to regulate the expenses of the royal household and redress public grievances. This committee declared that the king had voluntarily conferred upon them their authority, and that it formed no precedent injurious to his prerogative. To escape from the control of the ordainers, Edward set off with Gaveston on a military expedition into Scotland; but any hope of renown was annihilated by the policy of King Robert, who persisted in avoiding a battle. When, in August, Edward attended Parliament to receive the advice of the committee, he found appended to articles respecting the observance of *Magna Charta* and the rights of the Church a decree that Gaveston, because he had given bad advice to the king, embezzled the public money, and estranged the affections of the sovereign from his liege subjects, should be compelled to leave England before November 1, on pain, if still found within the king's dominions, of being treated as a public enemy. Edward was in great distress of mind. Anxious both to regain authority, and, if possible to screen Gaveston, he objected for a time to these conditions, but yielded with a protest that he reserved for himself the right of amending any article injurious to the just rights of the crown, thus showing that he meditated the reversal of these ordinances.¹ At the beginning of November, Gaveston left England for Flanders. To escape from the control of his opponents, Edward withdrew into the North of England; but great was the indignation of those barons who thought their triumph complete, when, on January 1, 1312, only two months after his departure, Gaveston was again with the king at York, and a royal proclamation was then published announcing that he returned in obedience to the king's orders, was a true and loyal subject, and would maintain his innocence against any accusers. Edward restored to Gaveston all his former honours and estates. Constitutional measures appeared totally unavailing to restrain so headstrong a sovereign.

The leader of the barons who formed a confederacy against Gaveston was Thomas Earl of Lancaster, grandson of Henry III., and therefore the king's cousin, who also held the earldoms of Lincoln, Leicester, Salisbury, and Derby.

Edward was at length aroused to a sense of his danger by

¹ The ordinances were for the most part beneficial, enforcing existing charters, checking prodigal expenditure, and restraining the employment of foreigners.

the march of the confederates against him and his favourite. At York the king unfurled the royal banner; Gaveston, who was besieged in Scarborough Castle, was compelled to surrender to the Earl of Pembroke. He was promised personal safety, and was first taken to his own castle of Wallingford; but the Earl of Warwick appeared the next day with a large force, and conducted him to Warwick Castle, where his arrival as a captive was hailed with music and shouts of triumph. The chiefs of the party deliberated concerning Gaveston's doom. When a plea was offered in favour of his life, a voice replied, 'If you let the fox go, you will have to hunt him again.' It was in vain that Gaveston besought mercy. He was hurried to a neighbouring hill, and beheaded in the presence of the Earls of Lancaster, Hereford, and Surrey.¹

Although Gaveston had been the object of general hatred, the news of his execution without trial astonished the whole nation. Conferences were held between the deputies of the king and of the barons, and two Parliaments were summoned before terms of pacification were arranged. At length, on October 16, 1313, there was a public act of reconciliation.

Edward was seated on the throne in Westminster Hall, and the barons knelt before him expressing their sorrow for the offence which they had committed. After this humiliation on the part of the barons, a general amnesty was proclaimed, and more than five hundred pardons were issued to the noblemen and knights who had been concerned in the confederacy. The power of the King of Scots had gradually increased till, in 1314, Stirling Castle was the only stronghold in Scotland in the hands of an English officer. Mowbray, the governor, now declared that he should be forced to capitulate unless that important fortress were relieved before the feast of St. John. Upon which Edward appealed to the English chivalry to rescue that last acquisition of his father, and advanced into Scotland in June with a large army, increased, although perhaps not strengthened, by Welsh and Irish levies.

Bruce had carefully prepared to receive the English. His army consisted of 30,000 picked men, and he caused narrow pits to be dug in the ground near the castle, concealed by branches and turf, so as to prevent the approach of horsemen. Edward, who commanded the English army, was no

¹ The body of Gaveston was buried first at the Friars' Church at Oxford, afterwards at Langley, where Edward placed with his own hands two palls of cloth of gold on the tomb.—Lingard, iii. 296, note.

general, although not wanting in courage. The English were totally routed. 'Never through all her wars, before and since, did England suffer a humiliation which approached that of this battle,' named from the small stream called the Bannockburn.¹ Edward had arrived before Stirling confident of victory; he fled quickly to Dunbar, and proceeded to England by sea. Robert Bruce was merciful to his prisoners, and proposed a treaty, but Edward's obstinate refusal to allow him the title of King of Scotland put an end to the negotiation. A famine ensued, and the great barons expelled from their castles part of their numerous servants, who became robbers on the highways from mere want of subsistence: wheat was indeed but little cultivated in England.

No English sovereign had visited Ireland since the reign of John. The island was shared between the native inhabitants of Connaught and Ulster, and various immigrants, who, under the name of Englishmen, established themselves in the principal cities and in that part called 'the pale,' extending along the eastern and southern coasts. The hostile races held each other in deadly hatred. Living at a great distance from the seat of government, the new settlers defied the law, and sank into the state of the natives whom they harassed and despised. Such was the miserable condition of Ireland when Edward Bruce, brother of King Robert, at the request of some Irish chiefs, led a force of 6,000 Scots into that country. He was successful in many battles, and was crowned King of Ireland; but was at length defeated in October, 1318, and died in the engagement, leaving no result to compensate for the loss of many brave followers.

Three years after Edward's defeat at Bannockburn, he tried in vain to collect another army, while the Pope exerted himself to end the war, which had lasted ten years; and in 1317 the Scots recovered Berwick, which had been held by the English for more than twenty years.

King Robert replied to the Pope's exhortation by summoning a Parliament, which issued a declaration that Scotland had been independent before Edward I. availed himself of the vacancy of the throne, and that, having been delivered by the valour of their king, they would defy all attempts to renew their subjection as long as a hundred Scots remained. 'Their country,' said they, 'the most remote of habitable lands, was dear to them because it was their own.'² The northern coun-

¹ Burton's 'History of Scotland,' ii. 384.

² Lingard, iii. 319.

ties of England suffered grievously from the frequent Scottish incursions; and it appears by a writ of the year 1319 that more than sixty towns and villages, many of which are now market towns, were exempted from taxation on account of the utter destitution to which they had thus been reduced.¹

The humiliation of the barons after the murder of Gaveston did not afterwards prevent the ascendancy of the Earl of Lancaster; but the king was eager to emancipate himself from control, and soon found another favourite, for whom he showed dangerous preference. Hugh Despencer, whose father was one of the most powerful barons, was the new favourite, and complaints arose that no bishop or lord could do anything at court without the favour of these nobles. Irritated by this imprudent partiality, the Earls of Hereford and Lancaster headed an armed league, and demanded the banishment of these obnoxious noblemen. Edward replied with spirit that the elder was employed in his service abroad, and the younger in the fleet, and that he could not pass judgment on persons unable to answer their accusers.

Parliament was assembled at Westminster when the Earl of Lancaster arrived with his partisans, who filled Westminster Hall, and brought a long paper of charges against the Despenchers, accusing them of usurping the royal power, of appointing improper judges, and of other offences, and he required their banishment. The bishops delivered a written protest against this proceeding, but the king and his friends yielded to intimidation; the Despenchers were banished, and a general pardon was issued to Lancaster and his associates for all trespasses since the previous February.² A very short time elapsed before an act of imprudent defiance on the part of the king's opponents changed the aspect of affairs.

The queen, when on her road to Canterbury, applied at the royal castle of Leeds, in Kent, for a night's lodging, which was unexpectedly refused her by Lady Badlesmere, wife of the nobleman who had charge of the castle. A fray followed, in which several of the royal attendants were killed. On complaint being made of this treatment, Lord Badlesmere avowed the act as his own, after which the king took the castle, hanged Colepepper the governor, and eleven knights, and sent Lady Badlesmere to the Tower.

Indignation spread at the treatment of the queen, and many noblemen came forward to support the king. A revulsion

¹ Burton's 'History of Scotland,' ii. 401.

² It was then August, 1321.—Lingard, iii. 323.

ensued in their feeling, and they were brought to believe that the Despensers had been hardly treated. Upon which Edward ventured to propose their return, promising them protection until the sentence of banishment could be repealed by Parliament. Suspicion having spread that treasonable practices had been carried on by the Earls of Lancaster and Hereford with regard to Scotland, those earls openly revolted. Documents are said to exist which prove Lancaster's correspondence with King Robert.¹ He was pursued by Edward, and was arrested at Boroughbridge when hoping to join his Scotch allies, and was brought to his own castle of Pontefract, where the king and a council condemned him to immediate execution. Forfeiture and banishment had been the usual punishments inflicted on disloyal barons, but Edward seized the occasion to wreak more marked vengeance on one who had been relentless towards Gaveston.

The trial was illegal, and the attainder was reversed in the next reign. The Earl of Hereford was killed in the fray which took place before Lancaster's arrest, more than a hundred knights were taken prisoners, and Lord Mortimer was sentenced to imprisonment for life. Edward appeared to have the whole party at his mercy, and proceeded in triumph to hold a Parliament at York. The sentence against the Despensers was annulled, and the father was created Earl of Winchester, and enriched by estates which had been recently forfeited; the younger Despencer became once more the king's favourite, exciting, as before, general disgust by his ostentation and pride.

For a time the Government proved strong enough to put down insurrection, and in the succeeding year tried its strength against one of an order commonly exempt from its authority. Adam Orleton, Bishop of Hereford, who had been deeply engaged in Lancaster's conspiracy, was accused in Parliament of high treason, in having aided the king's enemies by furnishing them with arms, and even of having appeared with them on the field of battle. In spite of the remonstrance of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the rest of the prelates against the impeachment of a bishop before a lay tribunal, Edward, supported by some of his barons, insisted on summoning Bishop Orleton before the Court of King's Bench. For the first time, an English

¹ Lingard, iii. 325. According to Sir Walter Scott, an arrangement was made by Lancaster that his designs against the king should be assisted by a Scottish incursion, and that in return he would endeavour to obtain an equitable peace.—'History of Scotland,' p. 146.

bishop stood arraigned before a judge in a civil court. But the Church interposed: the accused bishop had but just been cited when the Archbishop of Canterbury entered, accompanied by the Archbishops of York and Armagh, and all the bishops who were able to reach London in time, who, with their crosses borne before them, and in all the pomp of their vestments and retinue, entered Westminster Hall, demanding the release of the Bishop of Hereford, with threats of excommunication in case of a refusal, and carried him in triumph to his inn. Unwilling to be foiled, Edward ordered the criminal charges against the bishop to be laid before a council, and obtained a verdict of guilty. The king immediately proscribed the bishop and sequestered his property; but by the influence of the Archbishop of Canterbury the proceedings were quashed, and Edward, by conduct in which he showed considerable spirit, only added to the number of his most implacable enemies.¹ The party opposed to the king had not been crushed by the execution of the Earl of Lancaster. Many among the people at large, and especially among the clergy, looked on the earl as the champion of freedom, and revered his memory as that of a martyr. One of the foremost of the Lancastrian faction was Lord Mortimer, who succeeded in escaping from the Tower and retired to France. Charles, surnamed 'le Bel,' brother of Queen Isabella, who had lately succeeded to the French throne, complained that Edward had not done homage for Guienne.

In 1325, Edward began a journey, but was detained at Dover by illness, and it was proposed by the French and Papal envoys that Isabella should proceed to Paris in his place; adding the further advice that Edward should transfer Guienne and Ponthieu to his son, and that the young prince might do homage instead of his father. Isabella went to Paris with a splendid retinue, followed by the young Edward; the ceremony was performed, but the queen delayed her return, and it was discovered that she associated with her husband's declared enemies, and that Lord Mortimer had been made the chief officer of her household. Isabella signed a contract of marriage between her son and Philippa, daughter of the Count of Hainault, and the Count added 2,000 men-at-arms to the forces which the Queen of England was collecting. She had left England in May, apparently on friendly terms with the king, but in Paris she concerted with all the English malcontents.

¹ Dr. Hook's 'Lives of the Archbishops,' iii. 478-80. Lingard does not mention the citation of the bishop before the court, but alludes to his treason, and 'being afterwards the king's 'mortal enemy.'—Lingard, iii. 337-44.

These were joined by Edward's own brother, the Earl of Kent, by the Bishop of Norwich, and others, from England; indeed the conspiracy of which she was the centre is said to have been especially directed by Orleton, Bishop of Hereford, whom Edward had arraigned and deprived of his possessions.

On September 24, Isabella landed near Harwich, the king's declared enemy, with less than 3,000 men; but she was no sooner on shore than barons, bishops, and knights flocked to join her, and she was soon at the head of a considerable army. Edward immediately issued a proclamation, calling upon the people for assistance, and granting pardon for past offences except in the case of Mortimer, for whose head he promised a large reward. A counter-proclamation from the queen promised good government, forbade plundering and all outrages, but inveighed against the two Despencers as public enemies. There is much obscurity as to this revolt; but Edward and his favourites had become generally odious, and the queen was welcomed by the people as a deliverer. The Primate supplied money for the payment of her troops, and she was joined by another brother of the king, the Earl of Norfolk.

The king's proclamation met with no response. When he appealed to the citizens of London for aid, they replied that their privileges excused them from marching out to fight, unless they could return 'before the set of sun,' but that they were willing to shut the gates against foreigners.

Edward left London for Wales, where were the chief estates of the Despencers, and entrusted the defence of Bristol to the elder nobleman.

The queen's followers increased daily, and committed acts of great violence in London, where they murdered the Bishop of Exeter. Bristol was soon taken, and the aged Earl Despencer was put to a cruel death as a traitor. Edward tried in vain to escape to an isle in the Bristol Channel with his favourite. They were apprehended, and Despencer was executed, while the king was consigned to the custody of the Earl of Lancaster at Kenilworth Castle, brother of the earl whom he had caused to be put to death four years previously.

In January, 1327, Parliament was summoned to Westminster in Edward's name, but with the object of ratifying his deposition. Bishop Orleton took the part of accuser, urging the vindictive temper of the unhappy king, and requested the members to return the following day, prepared to decide whether the crown should be retained by the present monarch or be immediately transferred to his son. At the appointed

hour the shouts of the London citizens were raised to confirm the suggestion of the bishop. No voice pleaded for the king. The young prince was declared king by acclamation, and immediately received the fealty of many peers and prelates. To give some legal form to these proceedings, the young prince was placed on the throne, and a Bill was brought forward by the Bishop of Winchester, charging Edward of Caernarvon with indolence, incapacity, the loss of the crown of Scotland, oppression of the Church, and cruelty to the barons. It was decided, nominally on these vague grounds, that the sceptre should pass from his hands to those of his son, Edward of Windsor. To confirm the act of deposition, a deputation, which included representatives of all classes, was sent to Kenilworth Castle, to obtain the semblance of a voluntary resignation from Edward, or, in case he should refuse to submit, to renounce his allegiance.¹ Two prelates who arrived the first at Kenilworth endeavoured to obtain Edward's concurrence by promises of a princely establishment, adding threats of a disgraceful deposition if he should offer opposition. They led him, dressed in a plain black gown, before the deputation. On seeing Bishop Orleton his fears at first overpowered him, but he was able to listen to their address, and to express his submission to their pleasure. The ceremony was concluded by the steward of the royal household, who, as at the death of a king, broke his official staff, and declared that all persons were discharged from Edward's service. On January 24, after the deputation had returned to London, the heralds proclaimed that 'Sir Edward, late King of England, has of his own good will, and with the common advice,' &c., 'put himself out of the government of the realm,' which 'should come to Sir Edward, his eldest son and heir,' an assertion unblushingly repeated at the young king's coronation on February 1.²

It might not have been expected that the Earl of Lancaster, brother of the earl whom Edward had condemned to execution, would prove a lenient gaoler; but, according to report, he endeavoured to alleviate the position of his royal prisoner, and Mortimer soon caused him to be transferred to other places of confinement. It is said that Edward in vain asked to see the queen, of the extent of whose cruelty he could have formed no conception. The life of a deposed monarch has been generally exposed to peculiar danger. It became known that associations were formed in the country for Edward's liberation, and that the clergy were likely to censure so faithless

¹ Lingard, iii. 344.



summoned the prelates and barons to meet her at Stamford, and declared before them that she had reason to dread peril from her husband's vengeance if she should again be in his company. The dark deed which ended the life of that unhappy king at Berkeley Castle, on the night of September 21, is involved in obscurity. The ruffians who committed the murder left no traces on his person, and spectators were admitted next morning to behold the corpse, but the distortion of his features showed that Edward died in great agony. The interment was conducted privately in Gloucester Cathedral.¹ A few years afterwards Isabella and Mortimer were deservedly disgraced and punished.

It was about this time that the order of Knights-Templars, originally founded two centuries earlier for the defence of Jerusalem, fell under heavy charges on account of the crimes of some of its members. The Pope declared against the order, and in January, 1308, the Templars in all parts of England were suddenly arrested, and their property was seized by the king. The principal members of the order suffered cruel tortures both in France and England, and the buildings in Fleet-street, London, which are still called the Temple, came into the possession of students of the law.

¹ 'Mark the year and mark the night
When Severn shall re-echo with affright
The shrieks of death through Berkeley's roof that ring—
Shrieks of an agonising king!'—Gray's 'Bard.'

CHAPTER XV.

EDWARD III.

A.D. 1327-1377.

THE reign of Edward III. must be considered as commencing in January, 1327, when, after the deposition of his unfortunate father, he was proclaimed king and shortly afterwards crowned.¹ As the young sovereign's age little exceeded fourteen, Parliament appointed a Council of Government, of which the Earl of Lancaster was the head; but, in defiance of this arrangement, the queen and Mortimer exercised supreme authority for three years, only allowing the Earl of Kent, brother of the late king, a nominal share in the direction.

The English rulers were desirous of maintaining peace with Scotland; but King Robert, who had been irritated by the denial of his royal title, hoped to obtain favourable terms from their present weakness, and now seized the occasion to send troops across the border. Great preparations were made by the English, and in the spring the young king arrived at York, where he was joined by Sir John of Hainault, the uncle of the princess to whom he was affianced, with a large body of troops. These foreigners, as usual, quarrelled with the citizens, and their frays led to bloodshed. In July news reached York that the Scots were laying waste the northern counties, and Edward immediately set forth with his army to meet them. But it was in vain that the royal army proceeded through Cumberland and Durham; it was only by the smoke of burning villages and by the devastation behind them that the English could trace the enemy's course, seeking in vain for those whom they hoped to conquer. The Scots, after their continual incursions,

¹ According to Lingard, Prince Edward 'was declared king by acclamation' at Westminster, on January 8, but not regularly proclaimed by the heralds till the 24th; after his father had been formally deposed. The coronation took place on February 1.

well knew how best to provide for their wants in that barren country. They rode on hardy little horses, each man carrying a bag of oatmeal, and an iron plate on which to bake their food. Wild cattle abounded, in the skins of which, suspended on stakes, they cooked their meat. So distressed, indeed, were the English by the difficulty of tracing their nimble foes, that Edward offered knighthood, or an equivalent of land valued at £100 per annum, to any man who would rightly inform him of their position. At length Thomas de Rokeby came to the king, asserting that he had been taken prisoner by the Scots, but that, having heard of the promised reward, they allowed him to offer his services. Rokeby led the English forces to the banks of the river Wear, where they beheld the Scots ranged in so strong a position that it appeared too desperate to attack them.¹ So bold, indeed, were their attacks, that Earl Douglas one night crossed the Wear with two hundred men, cut the cords of the king's tent, and killed several of his soldiers. After continued spoliation the Scots at length disappeared, and it was agreed by the English commanders that it would be useless to pursue them into Scotland. This disastrous campaign was succeeded by conditions of peace satisfactory enough to them, but very unpopular in England.

At York, in January, 1328, a document was issued in Edward's name styling Robert Bruce the 'illustrious King of Scotland,' and freeing him and his heirs from vassalage.² It was, moreover, agreed that King Robert should pay £20,000, divided into three annual instalments, to the King of England; that the little Prince David, who was only five years of age, should marry Jane, the sister of Edward, who was one year older; and that certain forfeited estates, which had belonged to nobles who sided with the English, should be restored to them. Four months after this treaty was signed, David and Jane were solemnly betrothed at Berwick-on-Tweed. The negotiations with Scotland were pending when the king's unhappy father was murdered; the young king, however, may not have been aware of the circumstances.³

The discontent felt by the English with the terms of this peace added to the hatred of Mortimer.

In January, 1328, Edward was married at York, to Philippa

¹ Edward knighted Rokeby, and promised him a grant of land of the value of £100 sterling.—Longman's 'Edward III.' p. 14.

² Burton's 'History of Scotland,' ii. 427. The treaty was ratified at Edinburgh on March 17, and by the English Parliament at Northampton in April, 1328.

³ Longman's 'Reign of Edward III.' p. 20.

of Hainault. The king was only in his sixteenth year, the bride still younger; but such premature marriages were not then uncommon.¹ While Mortimer held the chief power in England, the state of the country was lamentable. Armed men infested the courts of justice and sometimes seized the judges, 'extorting money from them by way of ransom.' Jousts and tournaments were found to be so dangerous from the meeting together of armed men that they were forbidden, unless held by special permission.

Mortimer now formed a plan to destroy his chief opponent, the Earl of Kent. He spread a report that Edward II. was still living in Corfe Castle, in Dorsetshire, closely imprisoned. The earl being informed that a number of influential persons were eager to make efforts for the late king's rescue, went into Dorsetshire to inquire into the truth of the rumour. He applied to the governor of the castle, giving him a letter addressed to his brother, if still alive. The governor sent this letter to Mortimer, who framed from what appear very trifling materials a charge of high treason against the earl. On March 11, 1330, the Earl of Kent was cited to appear before a Parliament composed entirely of Mortimer's faction. It was true that the earl, suspecting that his brother still lived, had consulted friends on the best mode of proceeding for his liberation. The Earl of Kent was condemned to death, and his enemies, fearing an insurrection for his release, in case of delay, resolved that the execution should take place speedily. It was difficult to find any man willing to be the executioner of a son of Edward I. At last a criminal from the Marshalsea prison was induced by the promise of pardon to execute the deed, and eight days after trial the earl was beheaded at Winchester. It was only by threatening with severe penalties those who might express indignation at the execution, or still circulate the report that Edward II. was alive, that Mortimer could awhile revel in security; but the king, then approaching manhood, had determined, to take the first opportunity of shaking off his subjection.² Parliament had been summoned to assemble at Nottingham on October 15, 1330. Queen Isabella and Mortimer having arrived there before the king, secured themselves in the castle, and only allowed entrance to Edward with a few attendants. Edward then consulted the governor on the possibility of his friends obtaining entrance into the castle by night. The governor replied that, by the

¹ Edward was born on November 13, 1312.

² Longman, p. 35.

queen's orders, the gates were most carefully secured, the keys being laid at night under her pillow, but that there was a subterranean passage, of which she knew nothing, leading from a cave on the west side of the castle to the chief tower.¹ Edward gladly took advantage of this disclosure, and on the night of October 19 he forced his way into Mortimer's apartment, accompanied by a party of friends strong enough to overpower resistance and to take the usurper prisoner. Several of Mortimer's adherents were seized the next morning, and all were sent prisoners to the Tower of London. Edward easily obtained from Parliament an Act of Indemnity, issued a proclamation stating his strong disapproval of the late rulers, and announced that he should henceforth himself direct the government. He summoned Parliament to meet at Westminster on November 26, and invited statements of grievances from all who had suffered wrong.

'Certain knights who came to Parliament as representatives of counties' had received bribes for supporting false claims, and he ordered the sheriffs, with the approval of the county, to send men 'who were not liable to suspicion.'²

Edward charged Mortimer with usurping royal power, murdering King Edward II., overawing Parliament at Salisbury, and contriving the death of the Earl of Kent; and besides, of having appropriated to himself the royal treasure and the payment made by the Scots.

'The earls, barons, and peers,' after examining these articles, answered that all the crimes specified were 'notorious, and known to them and to the people,' and adjudged that Roger Mortimer should be hanged as a traitor and enemy of the king and of the kingdom. Mortimer was accordingly executed on November 29, at Tyburn. Twenty-four years afterwards the judgment was reversed, because he had been judged without trial. Some of Mortimer's accomplices were also executed, but the Pope interposed to save Isabella from a public trial: Edward reduced her income, and confined her to the manor of Castle Rising, in Norfolk, where she passed the rest of her life in obscurity.³

King Robert Bruce died in the year 1329, leaving under the care of guardians the heir of his throne, David, who was in his

¹ 'This cave, made by a Saxon prince during the Danish invasions,' was afterwards called Mortimer's Hole.—Longman, p. 36.

² Longman, p. 37.

³ Lingard states that she received £3,000 per annum during 'the remaining twenty-seven years of her life.' Mr. Longman says that she had £1,000 for her maintenance, or 3,000 marks.

seventh year. The promise made at the conclusion of the war, that the estates of those English barons who had been dispossessed of their lands in Scotland should be restored, had not been fulfilled by the Scottish regent. Irritated by the denial, Lord Beaumont, head of the aggrieved barons, joined with Edward Baliol, son of the late King John, in planning an invasion of Scotland. Although Edward did not at first assist in the invasion in 1332, Baliol was triumphant; David and the little princess to whom he was affianced were sent to France for safety, and in less than two months after his landing, Baliol was crowned at Scone as King of Scotland.¹ Like his father in the reign of Edward I., Edward Baliol did not scruple to acknowledge himself a vassal, provided he might wear the Scottish crown. He admitted Scotland to be a fief under the supremacy of England, gave up Berwick and other lands, and offered to marry the young princess Jane in case she should not be united to David Bruce. Edward consulted Parliament at York 'whether he should claim Scotland as his own domain, whether he should retain its feudal service, like his ancestors, or receive its value.' This important question was considered separately by the clergy, the earls and barons, and the commons; but the attendance being scanty, they declined to give advice on so weighty a matter, and requested an adjournment.²

Baliol had promised to surrender Berwick, but the Bruce party threw in a strong garrison, and Edward blockaded the town. The siege had proceeded for two months, when, to the joy of the garrison, Sir Archibald Douglas gave hope of its relief; but that hope was crushed by a battle at Halidon Hill, in which the English archers made such destruction of the Scots, especially of the nobles, that it was said among the English that scarcely a man remained who could lead an army to victory. Berwick surrendered after this defeat, and Edward, by encouraging merchants to settle there, promoted the prosperity of the town. From the time of Edward Baliol's invasion of Scotland, the opposite party were supported by Philip of France. It was in his court that David and his affianced princess found refuge, and he continually sent aid to the Scots both in arms and money.

Philip's opposition to Edward was not confined to Scotland.

¹ Longman, p. 57.

² When Parliament again assembled at York at the end of January, they advised the king to consult the Pope and the King of France—advice which Edward did not follow.

He vexed him continually with legal processes regarding his Duchy of Aquitaine, and took every means to provoke him to war, which Edward for some years endeavoured to avoid.

Aquitaine, lying between the Garonne, the Pyrenees, and the ocean, was originally one of the great divisions of ancient Gaul. The southern part of the province acquired the name of Gascony, from the Vascones of Spain, while the northern continued to be called Aquitaine, or frequently Guienne. By Henry II.'s marriage to Eleanor, heiress of Poitou and Aquitaine, who was the divorced wife of Louis VII. of France, the whole duchy, including Gascony, became an English possession, and from that time, 1154, remained more or less subject to the monarchs of England for three hundred years.¹

Philip of France desired to reduce Aquitaine to the same dependence as that in which he held the other great fiefs of his crown, and as much as possible to unite the monarchy. Edward, in the year before the death of Mortimer, had complied with the summons of the King of France by going to Paris to do him homage. But the terms were not readily adjusted, as Edward demanded the restitution of certain lands in France of which his father had been deprived by the late king, Charles IV. This Philip refused, and required more complete homage than Edward would consent to render.² For several years the disputes between France and England had no decisive result, and Edward appears to have hoped they might be arranged; but in 1336 he discovered a secret plan for the invasion of England, under pretence of an expedition to the Holy Land, in which Philip had invited Edward to join. Before the accession of Philip of Valois in the year 1328, three brothers were in succession kings of France, Louis X., Philip the Long, and Charles IV. Isabella, the mother of Edward, was their sister, and Edward had been instructed that his right to the succession was better than Philip's, although the latter was approved by the peers of France. To justify that pretension, Edward's advisers maintained that, although by the Salic law females were excluded from the French crown, their sons might yet inherit, and that, therefore, though the wife of Edward II. could not become Queen of France, she might transmit the title of king to her son. Even, however, if the decision which all France had tacitly made in favour of Philip were disregarded, the daughters of the three last kings of France survived,

¹ The duchy of Aquitaine is called 'Guienne' by Hallam when enumerating the five ancient fiefs of the French crown.—'Middle Ages,' i. 39.

² Longman, pp. 29, 30. This was in June, 1329.

and the son of Jane, daughter of Louis X., 'stood one degree nearer the crown than Edward.'¹ Small circumstances conspired to fan the flame which shortly afterwards blazed forth, and began a war which lasted more than a hundred years.

Robert, grandson of the last Count of Artois, had twice brought his claims for that earldom before the Parliament of Paris, which had decided against him. In 1331 he laid before the court documents which were proved to be forgeries, and was consequently outlawed from France. He then found an asylum in England, and, eager for revenge, flattered Edward with the hope of obtaining the French crown.

Philip issued a prohibition addressed 'to all men,' directing them to abstain from tendering help, comfort, or advice in any way to one whom he considered his mortal enemy; while Robert suggested that Edward should form an alliance with the Flemings. Count Louis of Flanders, an intimate ally of the King of France, was usually at variance with his own subjects. One of the leaders of the party opposed to the count was James van Artevelde, who, although connected by birth with the highest families of Flanders, had espoused the cause of the traders. The appellation of 'the Brewer of Ghent,' given to Artevelde by his enemies, appears to have proceeded from his being a member of the guild of brewers, as noble persons with us sometimes enrol their names in London companies. He saw the advantages of a friendly alliance with England, and by his influence a treaty of commerce between the nations was concluded.

In 1337 Edward made great preparations for war, and to defend the English coast from invasion, provided that in case of need the people should be summoned by bonfires.² His measures were at length hastened by Philip's aggressions in Guienne; but it was not till the summer of 1338 that Edward set sail for Antwerp to prosecute his great enterprise. The pride of the English nation was gratified by the manner in which their sovereign was received on his progress up the Rhine to Coblenz, where the Emperor of Germany appointed him his vicar, and gave him authority to command the services of the princes of the empire. He was welcomed by men of

¹ Hallam, i. 46.

² Philip sent out large fleets with orders to do all possible injury to the English. Southampton was pillaged and burned by a body of Normans and Genoese.—Longman's 'Reign of Edward III.' pp. 109, 133, 144. It was arranged that in all churches near the sea the bells should be set ringing together in case of an invasion.

different classes, from James van Artevelde, the republican of Ghent, who had more influence than the Earl of Flanders, to the emperor himself.¹

But the co-operation of these allies could only be obtained by gold. To raise sufficient funds, Edward had pawned his jewels and even his crown, and had seized on tin and wool; but it was on the plunder of the enemy that he chiefly depended. This source of wealth was looked upon so confidently that liberal advances were made, both by Flemish and English merchants, and, in hope of plunder, military adventurers flocked to the standard of one who was considered the first general of the age. Under such circumstances delay added greatly to expense. It was the policy of the French to avoid a battle, and Edward's debts, after a fruitless campaign, amounted to the enormous sum of £300,000. To raise money for this and further war expenses, the king came to England in the spring of 1340, and obtained from Parliament an 'unprecedented supply, the ninth lamb, the ninth fleece, and the ninth sheaf,' besides an extra duty on the export of wool for the next two years.²

It was rumoured that Philip had collected a powerful fleet in the harbour of Sluys, intending to intercept the king on his return to Flanders. Edward took with him all the vessels in the southern ports, sailed from the Orwell in June, and gained a splendid naval victory. After this allies again flocked to his standard, hoping for a share of booty. At the head of an immense army he advanced to besiege Tournay, but found it resolutely defended. Edward adopted the title of King of France, and quartered the lilies on his arms. From his camp before Tournay he now wrote to the French king, whom he styled only 'Philip de Valois,' challenging him to decide their quarrel either by a personal encounter, by a hundred combatants on each side, or to fix the day for a general battle.³

The King of France, animadverting on the impropriety of this address, replied that Edward had for the second time entered the French territory, and should be shortly driven from it. Edward's finances were again becoming exhausted

¹ Edward's queen, Philippa, Princess of Hainault, was a woman of great prudence. At her suggestion, Flemish weavers had been induced to settle in England, and were already increasing the trade of London, Norwich, and other cities.

² Lingard, iv. 30.

³ Edward had before 'occasionally taken the title of King of France,' and appears to have been guided by the advice of Van Artevelde at this time in quartering his arms with those of France, adopting the motto 'Dieu et mon droit' on his seal.—Longman, i. 158.

by delay ; famine pressed the garrison of Tournay, and a truce was concluded, on which the Pope vainly endeavoured to found a lasting peace.

The money-lenders who had provided the funds were urgent for payment. He wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had been one of his chief advisers, for an immediate supply, but he stated in reply that the treasury was exhausted. Exasperated by the difficulties of his situation, Edward became suspicious of his ministers ; he suddenly arrived at the Tower in the stormy weather of November, immediately displaced the chancellor and treasurer, threw three of the judges into prison, and summoned Stratford, Archbishop of Canterbury, to appear before him. Fearful of encountering the king's anger, the archbishop had repaired to Canterbury, whither he was followed by a deputation from the king. Public complaint was made that the archbishop had failed to supply the promised sums of money for the war, for want of which the king's army had been reduced to the greatest distress. The archbishop was peremptorily required to advance the money due to the king's creditors, or to surrender himself into custody. Against this attack Stratford first replied by letters of remonstrance to the king, and next resolved on an appeal to the people. The cathedral was crowded when the aged primate appealed to the example of the sainted Thomas-à-Becket, and to the privileges granted by Magna Charta, and pronounced sentence of excommunication on all (the king and royal family being alone excepted) who should disturb the peace of either the kingdom or the Church. The archbishop found that it was very dangerous to be security for a king. Edward replied by summoning him into his presence, at the same time sending a letter to the prior of the convent where he had taken refuge, to be publicly read in all the churches. Edward stated that the archbishop had encouraged him to commence the war, but had failed to give the promised assistance after being security for large payments. On Ash Wednesday, Canterbury cathedral was again crowded. At the conclusion of the service the king's letter was read in English by the archbishop's direction, and he then explained that it had been impossible to collect the taxes, which had indeed been already mortgaged for the debts of the preceding year. The substance of this defence was written down, and copies of it were sent forth to be read in every church.

It was thus, before the invention of printing, that the pulpit assisted in spreading knowledge of public affairs. This dispute

is interesting on account of the appeal on both sides to the judgment of the people at large.¹

The archbishop refused to place himself on trial except before his peers in Parliament, in which determination he was supported both by the peers and the country. The need of a supply rendered the king more placable; and at the joint prayer of Lords and Commons, he received Archbishop Stratford again into favour, declaring in his presence, before a full Parliament, that he held him guiltless of all the charges brought against him. Sir Robert de Bouchier, a gallant soldier, was made chancellor when the Bishop of Chichester was deprived of the office. He is said to have been the first lay chancellor, and did not give satisfaction. It had been customary, we are told, that clergymen who aspired to fill the 'high offices of state' should be instructed in statesmanship, and bishops were sometimes better acquainted with law than with divinity.² It was about this time that the Commons, acting as a distinct body, declared that they could not grant an aid 'without consulting the commons of their counties;' 'the first occasion,' as it appears, 'on which members of Parliament openly pronounced themselves the representatives of the electors.' They demanded that another Parliament should be summoned, 'promising that in the meantime they would return to their counties and do their best to obtain a proper aid for the king.'³ They afterwards granted the required aid—80,000 sacks of wool—in the following February, 1340, but on certain conditions, 'without the fulfilment of which it would be a gift, not a grant.'

The attempts made by Edward to invade the North of France had failed. In 1341 a conflict for the duchy of Brittany gave him an opportunity of entering from the West, with a probability of success which was irresistible. The succession was disputed between John of Montfort, half-brother of the late duke, and that duke's niece, the wife of Charles de Blois, nephew of the king. The court at Paris decided in favour of Charles, and John de Montfort escaped to England in disguise. He was well received at Windsor, upon which he offered to hold Brittany as a fief of England, and to do immediate homage to Edward. De Montfort returned to Brittany to assert his rights, but the arms of Charles prevailed, and in November, 1342, his adversary was carried a prisoner to Paris, where he remained

¹ Dr. Hook's 'Lives of the Archbishops,' iii. 48; Lingard, iv. 34; and Longman's 'Edward III.' p. 179. Dr. Hook says that the chancellor (Bishop of Chichester and brother of the Primate) 'and all the great officers of state' were thrown into prison by Edward on his arrival. Lingard only says that they were displaced.

² See note in Dr. Hook's 'Lives,' iii. 71.

³ Longman, p. 161-2; and Hallam, ii. 176.

nearly four years. De Montfort's cause was nevertheless maintained by the bravery of his countess, unaided at first, though she afterwards sent over a knight to entreat for Edward's promised assistance, declaring that she regarded him as King of France, and would open to him all the towns in her possession. Edward yielded, and, although apparently not intending to engage personally in the war, gave orders that a hundred ships should be prepared at Orewell and Yarmouth to convey his soldiers to Brittany.¹ It is wearisome to read of negotiations which produced but a truce, and of campaigns ending without result. To the English, overloaded with the charges of war, they must have been worse than wearisome.

On March 2, 1343, Edward returned home after an utterly fruitless campaign. He remained in England during the whole of the next year, negotiating and attending to public affairs at home.²

Edward, who loved chivalric display, held a tournament, called 'a Round Table,' at Windsor, on January 1, 1344, in memory of King Arthur, to which he invited knights from the Continent. 'None,' as it is expressly said, 'came from France;' for Philip, jealous of the influence which Edward might exert over his visitors, 'forbade his subjects from attending, and set up a Round Table at Paris.'³ The tournament at Windsor was attended by Gascon nobles, who begged Edward to send over good soldiers under a captain able to defend them from the French, declaring that 'his good country of Gascony, and his good friends and his good city of Bordeaux were badly comforted and supported.'⁴ It does not appear that Edward immediately followed the advice of these loyal subjects; but in April, 1345, he appointed the Earl of Derby to command in Gascony, and authorised the Earl of Northampton to act against Philip in Brittany.

In May, De Montfort escaped from Paris in disguise, and fled to England: he did homage to Edward as King of France, and soon afterwards returned to Brittany.⁵ He died in Sep-

¹ Longman, i. 202. 'The war for the succession in Brittany was at first regarded as a private quarrel between two rivals, in which Edward supported one side and Philip the other.' In either case, 'the successor would be the feudatory of the King of France.'—Ib. 200.

² Ib. 223-4.

³ Ib. Soon after this public *fête*, Edward directed the erection of the present Round Tower at Windsor, which was built in great haste to receive the Round Table for the new order of Knights of the Garter. See 'Saturday Review,' August 11, 1866; and Longman.

⁴ See Buchon's Froissart, i. 182; Longman, p. 230.

⁵ It appears that, on his visiting England four years previously, the homage was promised, not rendered.—Longman, p. 197, note.

tember, 1345, leaving his son to Edward's guardianship, and the defence of Brittany to Northampton.¹

Before taking the field for another campaign, Edward thought it prudent to visit Flanders, and was accompanied by his son, the Prince of Wales, in July, 1345. Van Artevelde had for nine years been the head of the Government, conducting affairs with great prudence, but a serious quarrel had just arisen between the manufacturers of the larger towns, who wished to continue their monopoly, and the weavers; and the people of Ghent, encouraged, as it was believed, by the Duke of Brabant, rose against Van Artevelde, and murdered him, at the time of Edward's visit. The king, who immediately returned to England, is said to have intended to persuade the ruling party to depose their count, and accept the young Prince of Wales as the Duke of Flanders, a project to which Van Artevelde was favourable. Although no proposal of the kind followed Artevelde's death, the Flemings expressed their wish to retain Edward's friendship.²

At the end of June, 1346, Edward embarked for Normandy with the Prince of Wales, on whom he conferred knighthood. His first intention had been to assist the Earl of Derby in Gascony; but he was persuaded by a Norman knight, who did him homage, to invade France through Normandy, and he landed at Cape La Hogue on July 11, to the complete surprise of the French. He soon gained possession of Caen, then a city of twenty thousand inhabitants, and said to be larger than any English city except London. His ravages extended 'to the very gates of Paris,' and he burned St. Germain and St. Cloud.³ Philip had been too far distant to relieve Caen, but he soon collected a more numerous army than that of the English, and took up his head-quarters at St. Denis. Edward's situation became very hazardous. The bridges were destroyed by the French, and it was with difficulty that he found a ford across the Somme, where the English archers scattered the French, who were posted to guard the passage. The English troops were so closely pursued, that when Philip reached Airaines he found 'meat on the spits and even some tables ready spread,' which had been provided for the English.⁴ Edward resolved to await the French on an eminence near the village of Crecy. He invited his barons to sup with

¹ Longman, p. 242.

² *Ib.* p. 235. Mr. Longman gives it as his opinion that, 'even to the present day,' justice has not been done to Van Artevelde, 'one of the great men of the century, who accomplished much and attempted more' for the welfare of his country.

³ *Ib.* i. 248.

⁴ *Ib.* 251.

him, and cheered them with the hope of victory. The archers formed the great strength of his army, and he ordered the horse-soldiers to dismount, that they might not be tempted either to pursuit or flight. Having arranged the position of his forces, Edward rode on a small palfrey from company to company, dispensing to all words of encouragement. At ten o'clock on the morning of August 26, he ordered refreshments to be brought to the troops as they sate in their ranks with their bows and helmets before them.

The King of France marched that morning from Abbeville with so large an army as to render it difficult to keep order in his ranks. He was advised to postpone an engagement until his troops were in better array; but his impatience was kindled by the sight of the English army, and he promptly gave the signal to the Genoese cross-bowmen who formed the vanguard. Historians have described awful signs beheld on that day. A partial eclipse of the sun took place; flocks of birds, the presage of a storm, flew with cries over both armies; there was thunder and lightning, accompanied by torrents of rain. The fight was suspended till five in the afternoon. The Prince of Wales, then a youth of fifteen, was placed at the head of the first division, supported by the Earls of Warwick and Oxford. The Genoese proved no match for the English archers, and when they were dispersed the conflict became general, the prince leading. The issue was for a time doubtful, and a knight hastened to the king, who commanded the reserve, requesting that further aid should be sent to the prince, to which Edward replied, 'Let the boy win his spurs! he and those who have him in their charge shall earn the whole glory of the day'—words which were an omen of victory.

As darkness approached, the victory was decided. The King of France, whose horse was killed under him, unwillingly left the scene of danger, where many of the French still continued the contest after their sovereign's flight.¹ A great number of prisoners were made by the English the next morning of Frenchmen who had passed the night in the fields in search of their lords. Edward sent two noblemen with heralds to examine the battle-field, and register the names and rank of the fallen. Eighty banners are said to have been brought to the king. Eleven princes, eighty bannerets, twelve hundred knights, and

¹ It was midnight when he reached the castle of La Broye. The gate was shut. 'Who is it that knocks at this hour?' was asked in reply to the shouts of the king's companions. 'Open, Castellan, it is the unfortunate King of France!'—Longman, p. 261, with reference to Froissart.

thirty thousand persons of lower rank, fell. A truce was granted for the burial of the slain, and Edward assisted at the funeral service in mourning.

The most distinguished victim was John, the aged and blind King of Bohemia. With that recklessness of life then called heroism, he ordered his four attendant knights to lead him into the thickest fray, in order, as he said, to 'have a stroke at the English.' Placing the king between them, and interlacing their bridles, the knights spurred forward, and met certain death. The crest of the fallen king, three ostrich feathers, with the motto 'Ich dien,' or 'I serve,' was, according to general belief, then first adopted by the Prince of Wales, though latterly some doubts have been raised as to this statement. The young prince was warmly congratulated by his father on his prowess.¹

Edward now resolved to besiege Calais, to secure a harbour on the northern coast of France. Foreseeing that the town would offer a long resistance, he ordered huts to be erected to lodge his troops.

Meanwhile David Bruce, who was now on the Scottish throne, was encouraged by Philip to invade England. But although the greater part of the English chivalry were absent, either in Guienne, under the Earl of Derby, or besieging Calais, there were still men enough in England to march to the protection of the border counties. Excited by the danger, even priests joined the militia, and Philippa, Edward's queen, rode among the troops, addressing them in animating language, which drew forth their loyal acclamations. A battle, which took place at Neville's Cross, near Sunderland, resulted in a complete victory for the English.

The Scots lost 15,000 men, and their king was taken prisoner, through the bravery of a Northumbrian gentleman named Coupland, who was afterwards knighted and enriched. King David was conveyed to the Tower of London, and the national enthusiasm was greatly excited by these victories. England had now assumed a foremost place among European powers.

Meantime the siege of Calais formed a new example in military history. No assault was made, no military engines battered the walls, but the harbour was blockaded by the English fleet, the walls were guarded by a town of huts, and the besiegers relied

¹ Gunpowder is said to have been introduced into Europe by the Saracens, and it is believed that in the battle of Crecy Edward III. employed some pieces of artillery with considerable effect; but the English archers won the battle of Poitiers.—See Hallam, i. 341.

on subduing the inhabitants by famine. Aware of the king's intention, John de Vienne, the governor, dismissed seventeen hundred persons, including women and children, in order to reduce the number of inhabitants. Edward, 'with that generosity which sometimes gave a grace to his character,' allowed these poor people to pass through his camp, and even supplied them with a meal and money for their journey.¹

But when, after further delay, five hundred more of the wretched inhabitants were driven out, there was no further mercy in store. Although the besiegers were plentifully supplied from Flanders and England, they closed their lines against these unfortunate sufferers, and they perished.² Philip exerted himself for the relief of Calais, but without success. When the siege had lasted eleven months, the governor, in despair, asked for terms of capitulation. After threatening to put the whole garrison to death, Edward made known his intention to take the lives of six of the principal townsmen as a sacrifice for the rest. When the inhabitants met to consider this, one of the most distinguished, named Eustace de St. Pierre, presented himself as a willing victim, and five other citizens followed his example. A procession was formed, headed by Vienne, the governor, who rode on a palfrey on account of his wounds, followed by fifteen knights, bareheaded and with their arms reversed, after whom came the six self-devoted men, barefoot and bareheaded, carrying halters. It is said that the king received these brave men with apparent severity, even sending for the executioner; and, notwithstanding the spirited intercession of the brave Sir Walter Manny, their death appeared impending, when Queen Philippa, kneeling before the king, implored him for mercy with so much earnestness that he yielded, and left the prisoners at her disposal. She clothed them, invited them to a plentiful repast, and set them at liberty, each receiving from her a small present, and Edward himself settled a pension of forty marks a year on Eustace de St. Pierre.³

Calais surrendered on August 3, 1347.

To secure his conquest, Edward expelled those Frenchmen who refused to swear fealty to him, and brought over an English colony. Calais soon became a place of consequence and the

¹ Hume gives this expression of praise.

² Lingard, iv. 55. There appears to be some doubt about this. Froissart relates Edward's generosity to the larger number. The English historian Knighton only speaks of 500 persons coming out from Calais, who mostly perished. Mr. Longman mentions mistakes made by Knighton, p. 269, note.

³ Longman, i. 287; Lingard, iv. 57.

general mart for English merchandise, continuing to flourish under the rule of England for more than two centuries.

Pope Clement VI. now offered to mediate, and the Kings of France and England agreed at the end of September to a truce to last till June, 1348. It was arranged that hostilities should immediately cease in all the provinces of France, and Edward returned to England with his queen and the Prince of Wales. For the first time he returned from a victorious campaign.¹ Edward was still in the prime of life—only thirty-five years of age—and the prince, who had taken so leading a part at Crecy, was only in his eighteenth year. During the succeeding eight years no general war was carried on between England and France; but the truce, although from time to time renewed, was as often interrupted, and local hostilities never ceased. Even during the armistice, Edward found occasions for the display of that prowess then accounted the most appropriate accomplishment of a sovereign. In May, 1349, an attempt was made by De Charny of St. Omer to obtain possession of Calais by bribing the governor, Emeric. The plot was divulged to the King of England, and before De Charny arrived, assured of success, Sir Walter Manny and about two hundred soldiers were prepared to receive him, and among the knights under Sir Walter were Edward and his son. The fierce combat which ensued was, according to Froissart, 'pleasant to see,' and the bravest of the French knights, Eustace de Ribault, surrendered to Edward, after a sharp personal struggle, not knowing the rank of his opponent. De Charny and several other knights, who were taken prisoners, were entertained afterwards at supper, when Edward, after reproving De Charny for his conduct, placed his own chaplet of pearls on the head of Ribault, asking him to wear it for his sake, and declared him free. Soon after this exploit, Edward returned to England; and although this plot to surprise Calais must have been known to Philip, Edward did not resent it as a breach of the truce.² De Charny was obliged to pay a large ransom. Philip of Valois died in August, 1350. Edward did not oppose the succession of his son, John—called Duke of Normandy—and the truce was still prolonged.

Spain was in alliance with France. Complaints were brought to England that the Spaniards had attacked English merchant vessels, and were gathering forces to destroy the English navy

¹ It was probably at this time that the Order of the Garter was instituted. Soon after the king's return 'twelve blue garters were ordered for the royal jousts at Eltham.' The origin of the order is an obscure point.—Longman, i. 299.

² Longman, i. 320.

and invade England. These rumours, although insufficient to justify a declaration of war, determined the king to attack the Spaniards by sea; and in the same month of August he embarked at Sandwich, accompanied, in other vessels, by his sons, the Prince of Wales and John of Gaunt, and by many of his principal noblemen and knights. The joyous manner in which Edward set forth appears more like one already victorious than befitting a commander about to engage in certain peril.

He was attired, we are told, 'in a black velvet jacket, with a beaver hat which became him well, and sat on the bow of his ship while his minstrels played on the harp and sang to him.' A man was stationed 'at the castle on the mast' to look out for the Spanish ships, and when, on Sunday afternoon, August 29, large Spanish vessels were seen approaching, the king ordered the trumpets to sound and preparation to be made for battle. The English practice was to grapple each of their largest ships to a still larger Spanish ship, and then to engage in fight.

The Prince of Wales's ship grappled with a large Spanish vessel, with which he long contended in vain; his own ship was pierced with many holes, and he was in great danger, when the Earl of Derby came to the rescue, attacking the Spanish vessel on the other side, and saved the prince and his crew. The English captured fourteen Spanish ships, but lost several vessels and many men. Edward at length ordered his trumpets to sound a recall, and soon after nightfall anchored at Rye. This combat is called 'unrivalled in English history,' on account of the high rank and intrepidity of the leaders. 'It was, moreover, a victory over a new enemy, for the pride of Spain was then for the first time humbled by an English fleet.' The English people, proud of this success, called their sovereign the 'king of the sea.'¹

The war carried on in France is said to have cost the lives of 50,000 Englishmen, but a plague called 'the Black Death,' which had been advancing through Europe since the year 1347, nearly effaced the memory of former losses.

For a time the course of business was interrupted; Parliament broke up, the courts of justice were closed, and no labourers were seen in the fields.

The burial-grounds in London proved so insufficient that Sir Walter Manny purchased a field of thirteen acres as a public cemetery, on part of which the Charter-house now stands. The destruction of large numbers of the people naturally

¹ Mr. Longman makes this quotation from Nicolas' 'History of the British Navy,' referring also to Froissart (Longman's 'Edward III.,' p. 328).

tended to raise wages; but in 1350 a royal edict was issued proclaiming that 'because a great part of the people, principally of labourers and servants, is dead of the plague,' every man or woman 'not having of his own wherewithal to live' shall be compelled, 'if required, to serve another for such wages as were customary in the twentieth year of our reign.' Masters were forbidden to raise their wages or to give alms. Parliament confirmed these regulations, even rendering them more oppressive, but attempted some compensation by desiring that provisions should be sold 'at reasonable prices.'¹ In spite of these attempts to restrain their liberty, 'labourers continually escaped from one county to another, in the hope of getting better wages,' although they became liable to branding and imprisonment for so doing. The injustice of thus depriving labourers of their fair wages led them to form hostile combinations, and was in the next reign one cause of the rebellion under Wat Tyler.² Great numbers of the clergy died of the pestilence, whose places were frequently supplied by ignorant men, many of whom were inclined to join in sedition.

The English and French governments competed for the alliance of the Flemings. The Count of Flanders was induced to take part with France; but the people preferred the English alliance, and many who were banished from Flanders on account of their friendship for Edward were heartily welcomed in England.³

In November, 1355, the King of England again invaded France from Calais. The King of France advanced to meet him, and Edward requested him to wait a few days till their armies drew near, that they might decide the campaign by a great battle. John declined the challenge, and Edward withdrew to Calais. The invasion of Aquitaine was the first expedition entrusted to the direction of the Prince of Wales, who was now twenty-four years of age. It is remarkable, indeed, that there does not appear to have been any concerted plan in these English invasions, although conducted on a greater scale than any previously undertaken; it even seems improbable that they were attempts to gain immediate possession of the French throne. In 1354, Edward 'again offered to give up all claims to the crown of France for the sake of peace;' but the strife continued for Aquitaine.⁴

The Prince of Wales, who was after this time generally called the Black Prince (some say from the colour of his armour),

¹ Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 308.

² Longman, quoting Rymer, vol. iii.

³ Longman, i. 309-312.

⁴ *Ib.* 354.

was at the head of 60,000 men, and issued orders to his soldiers to burn, pillage, and destroy the country, for which they divided into separate bands.¹

The desolation which was now spread over the fertile provinces of southern France must have made the unhappy inhabitants loathe the English name.

The prince himself stated that, following the course of the Garonne, he had laid in ashes more than five hundred cities, towns, and villages. The city of Narbonne, in Languedoc, is described as then little less populous than London. The inhabitants of Montpellier fled to Avignon for safety, at that time the residence of the Pope; and the Pope offered a large sum of money if the province of Perigord were spared, but the prince refused to be stayed in his course. It was not that conquest was his aim so much as to weary the people with the war and to enrich his followers by rapine. The harvest was trodden down, the cattle slaughtered, all the provisions which the army could not consume were destroyed, and all the prisoners able to pay their ransom were taken to Bordeaux, the capital of the English provinces of France. The French chronicler, who tells with animation the occurrences of this reign, relates that the poor fishermen of the coast were the only class who did not participate in the national enmity. These men alone were not at strife, but rather helped each other by buying and selling on the sea by turns, according as they had succeeded in their fishery.² The King of England was recalled from France by the news that the Scots had, as usual when there was war elsewhere, spread devastation over the border counties. Edward hastened home, obtained liberal supplies from Parliament, and assembled his forces in Northumberland. Edward Baliol, too weak to be an effective ally of a king whom most Scotchmen regarded as their enemy, gladly made over to Edward his disputed rights to the crown of Scotland, and Edward, with the banner of Scotland displayed before him, marched through the southern counties, meeting no enemy, but ignobly wreaking vengeance on villages and farms. The devastations of this expedition caused it to be long remembered in those unhappy counties as 'the burnt Candlemas.'

The Prince of Wales had overlooked the danger to which he

¹ Lingard gives this reason for the appellation (iv. 69). Dr. Hook says, in 'Lives of Archbishops,' iv. 153, 'The French, after the battle of Crecy, spoke of him as "Edouard le Noir," and the English soldiers adopted the form.'

² Froissart, iii. 133, quoted by Thierry, iii. 184.

was exposed by penetrating too far into a hostile kingdom. The King of France assembled his vassals, crossed the Loire, and had advanced within a few miles of Poitiers before the prince was informed of his approach.

Becoming suddenly aware of his dangerous position, the prince is said to have exclaimed, 'God help us! Nothing now remains for us but to fight bravely.' The French cavalry was greatly superior in numbers, but King John observed that the ground, which was covered with vineyards and intersected by hedges, was unfavourable to its movement, and therefore only allowed part to remain on horseback, directing a select force to disperse the archers who formed the front lines of the English army.

The arrangements for battle were scarcely completed when Cardinal Talleyrand Perigord, the Papal legate, arrived, and earnestly besought both leaders to listen to terms of peace. He found more attention from the prince, who had been surprised, than from the King of France, who expected his long-deferred triumph. The prince must have fully recognised his peril when he offered to restore his conquests and captives, and to promise not to engage in war with France for the next seven years. French honour might surely have been thus satisfied, but, unhappily for his country, the Bishop of Châlons induced King John to require the prince to surrender himself and a hundred knights prisoners of war. This proposal was indignantly rejected, and the night was spent in preparing for battle. Remembering Crecy, the English, outnumbered as they were, still hoped for success.

The archers again won the battle. The French cavalry, entering the field by a narrow lane, were thrown into confusion by shafts from unseen foes, directed with practised skill, which penetrated all ordinary armour. Victory soon inclined towards the English; but the bravest warriors of both nations surrounded the King of France, who, after his reserve had fled, led up his division on foot, 'and fought for honour, when evidently too late to fight for victory.'¹

The greater part of the French nobles successively fell; John's youngest son, scarcely fourteen years of age, continued by his father's side until wounded; the king himself, wounded in the face and beaten down, must have been totally overwhelmed, had not his opponents wished to preserve him to be their prisoner. He at last surrendered to a French knight,

¹ Lingard, iv. 75.

who, after banishment from France, had enlisted under the English banner.

The young French prince was also taken. Then was Prince Edward's greatest triumph. He advanced to meet his royal captives with chivalrous kindness and courtesy, praised the valour shown by the king, and ascribed the issue of the contest to causes beyond human foresight. A repast was prepared, and, with courtesy which now appears excessive, the prince insisted on standing behind the king's chair during the meal, declaring that the difference of their rank made greater familiarity unsuitable.

Immediately afterwards the prince conducted his captives to Bordeaux, agreed to a truce for two years with the Dauphin, and returned to England in the spring.

The alarm at Paris, says a French historian, was great when the remains of the routed army, headed by the Dauphin, brought the news that France no longer had a king, or barons; that all had been killed or taken.¹

Terror anticipated the speedy advance of the English, and that Paris, and even the whole kingdom, might fall before the conquerors of Calais. On May 24, triumphal arches were thrown across the streets of London, and tapestry and trophies exhibited, when the King of France appeared, mounted on a cream-coloured charger magnificently caparisoned, accompanied by the Prince of Wales riding on a small pony.

The acclamations which greeted the victor of Poitiers must have been painful to the King of France. Some hours elapsed before the cavalcade reached Westminster Hall, where the king was seated on the throne, surrounded by prelates and barons. Edward gave John a courteous reception, and assigned the palace of the Savoy, and afterwards Windsor Castle, for his residence and that of his son.

It has been observed that success in the great battles of Crecy and Poitiers was chiefly due to the English archers, men generally of the middle class, and attached, according to the custom of the age, to the knights and squires who wore heavy armour and fought with the lance. The use of the bow, although compulsory, was popular in England. In the reign of Edward III. all persons were desired to practise archery on holidays, and games likely to withdraw the people from that exercise were forbidden. Archery was the pastime of the London citizens, and on certain occasions the lord mayor, accompanied

¹ Michelet, 'Histoire de France.'

by the aldermen and sheriffs, used to lead them into the fields. The merchants and citizens of London were acquiring large fortunes at this time, and the king treated them with honour.

The young noblemen of England and France had been accustomed to resort to the tournaments held in both countries, and the war between the sovereigns was conducted much like a great tournament, where the combatants fought indeed with desperate valour, but preserved the courtesy and fair play customary in such entertainments.¹ Illustrious prisoners were frequently allowed to return home on their word of honour, and if unable to pay their ransom generally proved too honourable to escape from their obligations by flight. 'In this war of gentlemen,' says a modern French writer, 'the worst fate which awaited the vanquished was to be compelled to take a share in the feasts of his conquerors, and to join, as heartily as he could, in the English hunts and tournaments. Such a war was a pastime for the nobles; only the lower classes felt its horrors.'² But those horrors were now too apparent, and the King of France could not be insensible to the afflicted state of his country. The pestilence of 1348 was accompanied in France by famine. Companies of adventurers who were dismissed from the service of John or Edward after the battle of Poitiers, roamed over France in search of pillage, while no force existed sufficient to check their depredations. The misery was fearfully increased in some provinces by an insurrection of the peasantry, frantic with wretchedness, who revenged the wrongs of past ages by barbarous attacks on their present lords. This insurrection was called the 'Jacquerie,' from the cant phrase Jacques Bon-homme, frequently applied to the peasants.

The sympathy existing between the English and French nobles, and their alienation from the lower class, are illustrated by an incident related by Thierry, the French historian: 'About the middle of the fourteenth century, twenty English knights who had been engaged in the war in Flanders crossed France on their way to Aquitaine. Near Meaux they met a troop of peasants in rebellion against the nobles. The English knights considered it their duty to make common cause with other nobles in punishing their disaffected serfs, and rushed immediately to the onslaught on their war-horses. After having slain a great number of the peasants, they proceeded, well satisfied with their fine passage of arms.' Notwithstanding their national

¹ Hallam, i. 48.

² See Michelet, 'Histoire de France,' iv., close of the vol.

enmities, the nobles of different countries held themselves brothers in arms by the laws of chivalry.¹

Petrarch, revisiting Paris in 1360, thus described the changed aspect: 'I could scarcely believe that this was the same kingdom which I had once seen so rich and flourishing, where I now found extreme poverty, lands uncultivated, houses in ruins. Even near Paris are marks of destruction. The streets are deserted, the roads overgrown with weeds; the whole is a vast solitude.'

The conditions of peace were hard. Edward required an enormous ransom for John and the other prisoners, and stipulated that if he renounced his claim to the French crown he should have the full right of a monarch over those provinces of France which he had hitherto held as a vassal. After much hesitation, John consented to these demands; the instruments were sealed, and two prisoners of war were sent to France to obtain the ratification of the States-General.

But the French nobility would not agree to purchase their king's liberty by a partition of the monarchy, and sent a peremptory refusal.² Edward therefore prepared for another campaign, and in the autumn of 1360 sailed again to France at the head of the best-appointed army which had yet appeared under his banner. He forced his way as far as the gates of Rheims, the city where the kings of France were usually crowned, and expressed his intention of having that ceremony performed on himself; but the inhabitants forbade him entrance, and made so gallant a defence under their archbishop, that he turned aside to Burgundy. Whilst Edward, in the early spring, followed the course of the Seine; and burned the suburbs of Paris, a French fleet spread terror on the coast of Sussex, and pillaged the town of Winchelsea. Finding his army in straits for want of provisions, Edward drew off towards Brittany, threatening that he would soon return. Although rejecting terms offered by the Dauphin, the English fled like a routed army to save themselves from famine. They reached Chartres, where they were exposed to a most dreadful storm. Amidst the crash of the elements and the sight of men perishing around him from lightning or fatigue, the king's heart was at length softened; in a fit of remorse he is said to have sprung from his saddle and to have solemnly declared that he would no longer refuse conditions if but compatible with his honour.³

The peace, called that of Brétigny, from the village at which it

¹ Thierry, '*Dix Ans d'Etade*,' p. 115.

² Lingard, iv. 81.

³ Lingard, iv. 84.

was signed, was agreed upon in the following May. Edward renounced pretensions which he found himself unable to maintain, and restored all his recent conquests excepting Calais and Guisnes, obtaining the promise of full sovereignty over Guienne, or Aquitaine. A ransom of three million crowns of gold was to be paid for the liberty of King John. This treaty was ratified at Calais with great solemnity. Edward and John met in the principal church and listened together to the conditions by which they were bound.¹ The calamities of war had been so great that the peace occasioned great rejoicing at Paris. But it was otherwise in those provinces which were now required, as they feared, for ever to submit to English rule. The nobles of southern France had maintained a considerable share of feudal independence, and could not endure the dismemberment of the monarchy. The citizens of Rochelle implored the King of France not to desert them, and declared that they would pay taxes of the value of half their estates rather than fall under the rule of England. It was with heaviness of heart that John urged these loyal subjects to yield to that fate against which he had struggled so long in vain. At length they sullenly submitted, saying in effect, 'We will obey the English with our lips, but our hearts shall never forget their allegiance.'²

France now groaned under the weight of taxes which her poverty rendered scarcely endurable, and four years after the treaty of peace was signed only a third part of the sum fixed for the king's ransom had been paid. Finding himself unable to perform his promises, and troubled that his son, the Duke of Anjou, had broken his parole by leaving Calais, King John set a rare example of fidelity, in 1363, by returning to England. 'If honour were banished from the rest of the world,' said he, 'it ought still to be held sacred in the breasts of kings.' Edward received the King of France with kindness, and the palace of the Savoy was again his residence. It was during this winter, probably, that the Lord Mayor of London had the singular honour of entertaining four kings. These were—his own monarch, the King of France, David of Scotland, who had been some time liberated, but was again in London, and the King of Cyprus, who came to England to solicit aid against

¹ In the year 1361, the plague again broke out both in France and England, and occasioned the death of the king's cousin, the duke of Lancaster. The duke's daughter was married to Prince John of Gaunt, afterwards called Duke of Lancaster, and was the mother of Henry IV. of England. In the same year the Black Prince married Joan, 'the Fair Maid of Kent,' daughter of the Earl of Kent put to death by Mortimer.

² Hallam, i. 58; Thierry, iii. 202, quoting Froissart, chap. 214.

the Turks. After joining the English court in many magnificent entertainments, King John became ill, and died after a short illness. He is said to have felt much friendship for the English, and was regretted by them. His remains were conveyed to France, attended by a splendid retinue. After the settlement of Brétigny, Edward formed his dominions in the South of France into a principality, under its ancient name of Aquitaine, and bestowed it on the Prince of Wales, who kept a magnificent court at Bordeaux. In Aquitaine, Guienne and Gascony were included, but the name of Guienne is often used in history for the principal province under the English rule. The Prince of Wales presided at Bordeaux for eleven years, and in that city his son, the unfortunate Richard II., was born. The prince's government appears to have been successful till he was tempted to interfere in the affairs of Spain, then divided into separate monarchies. Then he became the ally of Peter, surnamed the Cruel, King of Castile. The aid of the prince was vain; Peter was murdered, and Peter's half-brother, Henry, his opponent, reigned in Castile. In consequence of this expedition, the prince so increased the taxes of his province as to excite the indignation of the nobles, and, in spite of the previous stipulation, they appealed to King Charles of France. Charles summoned the prince to appear at Paris as his vassal, and, when he refused to do so, authorised the invasion of the provinces held by the English.

Provocation was thus given for a renewal of war. The King of England could not tamely surrender his French dominions. He convoked Parliament, inveighed bitterly against the bad faith of Charles, and re-assumed the title of King of France, offering fiefs in that country to successful adventurers. All Englishmen between the ages of sixteen and sixty, without distinction of laymen or clergy, were ordered to prepare for the defence of England. Reinforcements were sent to the Prince of Wales; and his brother, the Duke of Lancaster, conducted an army to Calais; but the French pursued their successful plan of declining a battle, while the English were held in detestation by the inhabitants of those provinces which they laid waste.

The Limousin, situated in the centre of France, was one of the provinces comprised in the duchy of Aquitaine. Limoges, the capital of the Limousin, had received favours from the Prince of Wales, and when the city surrendered to the French he swore that he would punish its ingratitude or perish. The prince, after a month had been spent in undermining the walls,

made a wide breach into the city. Fearful of their doom, the inhabitants, including women and children, threw themselves at the prince's feet crying for mercy. But it then appeared as if the vindictive spirit of Pedro the Cruel animated him who had been called 'the Mirror of Knighthood.' No prayers, no representations, could mollify his resentment against these innocent beings, of whom upwards of three thousand were slaughtered. The French knights of the garrison, eighty in number, placed themselves against a wall, resolving to fight to the last. The prince, admiring their rank and bravery, interposed to offer life and liberty to the survivors, which they gladly accepted, but the city was reduced to ashes. The massacre of Limoges has left a foul blot on the memory of the Black Prince, and disgraced the 'chivalry' which nourished contempt for the other orders of society.¹ We enjoy instances of the generous courtesy which softened the roughness of war and introduced greater mildness in the treatment of prisoners, but this was too frequently limited by distinctions of rank. 'Compare,' says Hallam, 'the generosity of Edward III. towards Eustace de Ribamont at the siege of Calais with the harshness of his conduct towards the citizens.'

The military career of the Black Prince was now over. He had brought from Spain an incurable malady, under which he lingered for six years, taking little part in public affairs. On leaving Guienne he consigned the government to his brother, John of Gaunt (born at Ghent), Duke of Lancaster, who, having married a daughter of the deceased Pedro, assumed the title of King of Castile.² Before the end of the year, John followed his brother to England, where he was frequently called by that nominal title.

In 1372 the Constable of France reduced several towns of Aquitaine, and besieged Thouars, to which many nobles of the English party had retired. Unable to offer a long resistance, the garrison agreed to capitulate to the brave French general, Du Guesclin, unless relieved within a certain interval. When this was related to the aged king, he once more collected an army; once again he embarked with two of his sons. Even the Black Prince tore himself from his sick chamber, and resolved once again to encounter his honourable foe. But the fleet contended for nearly a month with contrary winds with-

¹ Lingard, iv. 98, 99, and note; Hallam, ii. 464.

² John of Gaunt was then a widower. His marriage to Constance of Castile is said to have taken place in 1372, and about the same time his younger brother, the Earl of Cambridge, married Isabella, sister of Constance, 'with great pomp and feasting.'—Longman, ii. 193.

out being able to reach any French port. Edward, therefore, found it impossible to reach Thouars by the appointed day, and returned home.¹ In the course of a few campaigns the English were deprived of nearly all their conquests, and even in great measure of their former possessions in Guienne; but they still held Bordeaux, Bayonne, Calais, Brest, and Cherbourg, the keys of France, which made them formidable enemies. Wearing by successive disasters, Edward was glad of a truce, but the Pope failed in his efforts to bring about a lasting peace. Charles required that Calais should be restored, and the sums repaid which had been disbursed for his father's ransom. Edward refused, and persisted in demanding full sovereignty over Guienne.

His constant demands for money compelled him continually to apply to the House of Commons, and by degrees the representatives of the people became bolder, until they at length assumed the right of interfering to check or punish the abuses of the administration.

There had been an extraordinary interval of three years since the last Parliament; but no English assembly had taken so bold a course for the general welfare as that of the fiftieth year of Edward III., popularly styled 'the good Parliament.'

A determined resistance was made to those who had lately exacted large sums from the nation without rendering account of the heavy ransoms received from the French and Scottish kings, and the members promised that, if the king 'would do speedy justice on those of whom they complained, they would engage that he should be rich enough to maintain his wars for a long time, without much charging his people in any manner.'² Sir Peter de la Mare, who was chosen speaker, led the attack on the late ministers, the foremost of whom was John Duke of Lancaster.³ The Commons would not have ventured to speak so boldly had they not found a champion in the Black Prince, who was well known 'to favour the people and the knights,' and even now in extreme illness lent his last energies to aid the popular party. To be nearer Parliament, the prince removed to Westminster Palace. His town residence was on Fish Street Hill, which appears an uninviting locality for a

¹ Froissart is the authority for this account. 'Thus ended almost the last chance which the English had of re-establishing their possession of the duchy of Aquitaine.—Longman, ii. 212. 'When Thouars was taken, the greater part of the French army returned,' as Froissart writes, 'to France.'—*Ibid.*

² Hallam, ii. 187.

³ From this it appears that the Speaker of the House was at that time their leading orator.—See Longman, ii. 248. Parliaments, when dismissed, were dissolved, and a fresh election followed.—Longman, ii. 361.

prince who lived in great splendour at Bordeaux; he had also a castle at Berkhamstead. It is said that Richard Lyons, a London merchant, and one of the king's council, who was accused of peculation, 'tried to bribe the Black Prince by sending him a thousand pounds in a barrel;' but the prince sent it back, and Lyons was condemned to imprisonment during the royal pleasure. Similar penalties were likewise inflicted on others. The increasing disapprobation of the people now induced efforts to separate the king from Alice Perrers, the vain and grasping woman who brought dishonour on the decline of his life.

The eldest son of the Prince of Wales died at Bordeaux; his next son, Richard, was the heir of the crown; but the Duke of Lancaster was strongly suspected of planning to usurp the rights of his nephew.¹ A heavy blow fell on those engaged in the work of reform, when, on June 8, 1376, the Prince of Wales died at Westminster, while the king was still lingering in illness at Eltham Palace.

The first care of Parliament was to secure the succession to the young Richard, then only in his tenth year, and on June 26 he was brought before them, the Archbishop of Canterbury declaring him to be 'the true heir-apparent of the kingdom, in the same way as was his noble father.'² Both Houses of Parliament received the little son of their popular hero with rapture. The memory of the Black Prince may well shine amongst his countrymen, when even the French so far overlooked the misery in which he had involved their country as to pay a respectful tribute to his memory.³

On the Christmas Day following, the king who had improved in health for a short time, held a grand feast at Westminster, and the young Richard—Prince of Wales—was carried in state, and formally announced to be heir to the throne, all the prelates, barons, knights, and officers, of the various cities and ports then present, swearing that they owned him as their future king. On the Sunday before Candlemas, the citizens of London entertained the little Prince of Wales with curious mummeries at night.

¹ Longman, ii. 246.

² 'It is remarkable,' says Mr. Longman, 'that this should have been deemed necessary.' The Commons then prayed the king to create him Prince of Wales, which was done shortly afterwards.—Longman, ii. 256.

³ Michelet, v. 110. Mr. Longman says that the Black Prince died at Westminster, and was buried in Canterbury Cathedral (ii. 255). Lingard says that he died at Canterbury. There appears to be no doubt about his interment in the cathedral, but when so much interested in Parliament, it would appear more natural for him to remain in Westminster.

On January 27, when Parliament again met, the young Prince sat in the king's place. But the Duke of Lancaster had returned to power and had influenced the elections. His ascendancy brought great changes: he sent Sir Peter de la Mare, the late speaker, to prison at Nottingham, and deprived William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, an attached friend of the Black Prince, 'of his temporalities,' also prohibiting him from appearing within twenty miles of the Court.¹ The career of Bishop Wykeham was remarkable. His first appointment was that of surveyor of the king's works; and the extraordinary skill which he showed in architecture caused him to be employed in directing the improvement of Windsor Castle, where three hundred and sixty masons, who had been impressed in different counties, worked under his orders. In 1357 he received his first preferment in the Church, was made Bishop of Winchester, and became Lord Chancellor in 1366. The king was his warm patron; but in 1371 he incurred the censure of the House of Commons, and Edward, who habitually yielded to Parliament, removed him accordingly from the chancellorship. After his dismissal, however, he still continued in favour both with the king and the Commons.² Edward III., like his grandfather, energetically repelled the interference of the Pope, who claimed the right of appointing the clergy to vacant livings, and even to livings not vacated, confiscating to his own use the first year's income. Certain persons, called 'Provisors,' were appointed by the Pope to superintend the execution of these orders.

In defiance of the laws repeatedly passed, it was asserted in 1367 that in some cases, by means of the Pope's dispensation, one clergyman had been enabled to hold twenty benefices, and that foreigners were appointed who could not preach in English.³

The annual payment of 1,000 marks, which King John promised to the Pope, had not been made for thirty-three years. Edward I. refused it; but it was resumed in the weak reign of Edward II., to be again refused by Edward III. Both Houses of Parliament supported their sovereign in this refusal. The prelates, having asked for a day's consideration, agreed with the dukes, earls, and other great men, that 'neither King John nor anybody else could put himself, or his people, under subjection, without their accord and assent.' The Commons made a similar

¹ The temporalities were restored to the bishop three months afterwards, and he received a full pardon at the beginning of the next reign. The charges made against him, of mismanagement of the king's revenues, &c., are said to have been frivolous.—Longman, ii. 270.

² *Ib.* p. 269.

³ Hallam, 'Middle Ages,' ii. 37.

answer, declaring that 'it appeared that John's submission was made without the general assent,' and against the coronation oath, 'and that, if the Pope attempted to enforce payment, they would resist with all their power.'

A suspicion that the Pope, who was then living at Avignon, was encouraged in the renewal of this demand by the King of France, increased the national indignation, and this solemn resolution of Parliament set the question at rest for ever.¹

The Pope did not, however, cease entirely from interference, and in 1374, when the Duke of Lancaster went on an embassy to France to treat of peace, part of the mission was directed to an expostulation with him. The name of the celebrated John Wyclif first appears in history owing to the part he took in that embassy. He had previously opposed the mendicant friars at Oxford, and had lectured against the corruptions of the Church; but after his visit to the papal court he took a more decided tone, even calling the Pope 'the proud worldly priest of Rome.'

The Pope commanded the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London to take proceedings against Wyclif, and in February the mutinous clergyman was summoned before his ecclesiastical judges in St. Paul's. St. Paul's Church—not the present edifice, but a noble Gothic church, destroyed by fire in 1666—was crowded, when way was made for Wyclif's entrance; and to the surprise of many, he was supported by two of the most powerful men in the land, the Duke of Lancaster and Lord Henry Percy, the earl marshal. A dispute arose between the Bishop of London and Lancaster, who had provoked the citizens by proposing in Parliament that there should no longer be a lord mayor, but that a captain and the earl marshal should have the charge of the city. The people, who would naturally have taken the part of Wyclif, were irritated by Lancaster's disrespectful behaviour towards their bishop, and the assembly broke up in disorder.²

There was an end, however, of the proceedings against Wyclif during this reign, and the Princess of Wales, who possessed the respect of the citizens, used her influence in re-establishing order.

Meantime Edward was gradually sinking, and was attended in his last decline by scarcely any companion excepting the artful woman whose influence degraded his latter years. He

¹ Longman, ii. 96.

² Pauli, p. 263; Longman, ii. 287, 288. Wyclif had been before accused of heresy, but this prosecution appears to have been more political than religious.

expired on June 21, 1377, and was interred at Westminster Abbey, where the sword and shield which were carried before him in France were long exhibited as trophies of victory.¹

Successful in winning battles, rather than in the conduct of his military policy, Calais was the only addition to his former possessions remaining at the close of the reign.

Memorials of Edward's twelve children, 'including,' says Dean Stanley, 'those famous seven sons—the springheads of all the troubles of the next hundred years—were graven round his tomb,' only a few of which remain visible.² Considerable encouragement was given to commerce during this reign, and the emancipation of the villeins was rapidly spreading. Flemish weavers settled at Cranbrook in Kent, at Worstead in Norfolk, and at Norwich, and the king took much pains in protecting these industrious colonists from the selfish opposition of the English. As the towns prospered, the occupation of a merchant was held in increasing respect.³ Edward even enrolled himself a member of the company of Merchant Tailors; and the father of Michael de la Pole, afterwards Earl of Suffolk, was a merchant, who had enriched himself by lending money to the king during the French war. Dress was valued as the sign of rank, and was regulated by Parliament according to the income and employments of the wearer.

In 1351 the Parliament, which was distinguished as 'the Blessed,' enacted a statute defining high treason, which still remains in force. The charge had been previously so vaguely expressed that many persons were found guilty as traitors whose offence did not exceed felony or trespass. Thus, in 1347, a knight kept in his own castle a prisoner from whom he extorted a ransom of ninety pounds. Such an abuse was not uncommon at that time; but the knight was afterwards tried and convicted of treason, on the plea that in so acting he had usurped the royal authority. This judgment created so much alarm as to cause the Commons to petition for a more definite explanation of the charge. An evasive answer was returned to their petition, but they persevered, renewing it in 1351 when granting an aid, 'and extorted a satisfactory

¹ Mighty Victor, mighty Lord,
Low on his funeral couch he lies;
No pitying heart, no eye afford
A tear to grace his obsequies.—GRAY'S *Bard*.

² 'Memorials of Westminster Abbey.'

³ Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii., chapter on 'The State of Society.'

answer.' The offences then comprised under a charge of high treason were 'compassing or imagining the death of the king, queen, or prince; levying war within the realm; adhering to the king's foreign enemies; or counterfeiting the Great Seal or the coin.'¹

That France regained during the last years of this reign the chief part of those provinces of which the English victories had deprived her was the effect partly of the good policy of the French king and the valour of Du Guesclin, partly of the want of generalship repeatedly shown by the Duke of Lancaster. Lancaster's ill success in France was one reason of his want of popularity in England. In several invasions which he conducted he appears to have had no definite plan except to lay waste the country and provoke the King of France to engage in a pitched battle, which Charles strictly commanded his generals to avoid.²

Of the five sons of Edward III. who attained mature years, the two eldest—the Prince of Wales, and Lionel Duke of Clarence—died before their father; the first leaving his son Richard; Lionel, one daughter, married to Edward, Earl of March, from whom descended the House of York.

The pretensions to the throne ascribed to John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who was the eldest surviving son of Edward, are said to have been considered valid by 'divers learned and wise men in England;' 'but the old king was so extremely affectionate unto his eldest son, the Black Prince Edward, newly dead, that he would not hear of any to succeed him, but only Richard, the said prince's son.'³ Younger than the Duke of Lancaster were Edmund Earl of Cambridge, created Duke of York in the next reign, and Thomas Earl of Buckingham, raised by Richard II. to the rank of Duke of Gloucester.

It appears that the English army which fought in France consisted almost entirely of men who served for pay, and who were enlisted by men of rank and influence. 'The private lancers and even archers,' says Hallam, 'must have been chiefly taken from the smaller gentry, or rich yeomanry, of England.' We find that at the beginning of the war, Edward ordered payment to be made to Ralph Stafford, who volunteered

¹ Lingard, iv. 111. Hallam calls the 'Statute of Treasons' 'a declaration of the ancient law,' comprehending what the judges who drew it could find in records now perished, or in legal traditions of remote antiquity.'—'Middle Ages,' i. 120.

² Longman, ii. 225.

³ Quotation from Parsons (appendix to Longman's 'Reign of Edward III.').

to take with him fifty men, at the cost, for a quarter of a year, of £455. Two knights bannerets were paid four shillings a day; thirty-one esquires, each one shilling; and mounted archers sixpence. For the payment of this force fifty-seven sacks of wool were assigned. Earls are said to have received eight shillings a day.¹

The large ransoms paid by captives added greatly to the profits of war. The sum demanded for the liberation of Du Guesclin, who was captured by John of Chandos at Auray, was 100,000 francs. It was considered so important to secure the services of this best commander of the French armies that the Pope assisted in paying this immense ransom.²

Great changes were being effected, less however by statutes, than by the natural progress of science and art. The use of gunpowder in war, first noticed at Crecy, led to the decline of chivalry. Parliamentary power was gaining strength, and the English language first found a poet in Chaucer. His great work, 'The Canterbury Tales,' was not, indeed, written until the middle of the next reign, but Chaucer was writing English poetry at the time when the statute was passed which commanded that thenceforth the English should be used instead of the French language in courts of law.³ From the time of the Norman Conquest, French had been the language of law and government in England, and the formal proceedings in Parliament were in French, although, after the introduction of representatives from the towns, freedom must have been granted to use English. Neither language, as may be easily supposed, was spoken in its purity; but in the early part of the fourteenth century the children of English gentlemen were taught to speak French from their cradle, and it was the only language which boys might use at school. About a quarter of a century after the passing of this Act the custom had changed. The habit of introducing French words injured for some time the native language. In the year 1373 Chaucer was sent as envoy to Genoa, and availed himself of the opportunity to visit Petrarch. After his return Edward ordered him to receive daily a pitcher of wine, for which an allowance of twenty marks a year was afterwards substituted.

¹ Hallam, i. 211, and Longman, i. 206.

² Longman, ii. 109.

³ This was in 1362. Chaucer was born in 1328, and is believed to have died in 1400.—Longman, ii. 70, 73. 'It is remarkable,' says Mr. Longman, 'that this law itself was written in French.' See also Lord Campbell's 'Lives of the Chancellors,' i. 254.

It deserves notice as a sign of improving comfort in dwellings, that glass was regularly imported into England about the middle of the thirteenth century, and during the reign of Edward III. a guild of glaziers was instituted whose business was to furnish houses with glass windows.¹

¹ See Pauli's 'Old England,' p. 421.

CHAPTER XVI.

RICHARD II., OR OF BORDEAUX.

1377. DEPOSED 1399.

EVEN while Edward lay on his death-bed, a deputation of London citizens waited on Richard Prince of Wales, eager to hail the speedy accession of the son of their beloved Black Prince. They advised him to leave Shene (the ancient name of Richmond), and to dwell at the Tower, as a place of greater security, and expressed the hope that the ill-feeling between them and his uncle, the Duke of Lancaster, might be forgotten.

On the day after his grandfather's death, Richard proceeded through London, where triumphal arches were erected to his honour. Three weeks afterwards, on July 16, the handsome boy, then in his eleventh year, was crowned at Westminster with unusual magnificence. After he had taken the usual oath, the archbishop addressed the people from the platform erected in the nave of the abbey, and asked whether they were willing to have this young prince for their king, to which they assented with loud acclamations, and at the conclusion Richard received the homage of his uncles and the earls and barons. Exhausted by the fatigue of this long ceremonial, the young king was carried in a litter to his own apartment, but soon summoned to preside 'at a splendid but tumultuous banquet,' where, according to instructions, he created four earls and nine knights.¹

Never did a child-king more require the care of a prudent regent! A council of prelates and barons was held next day to arrange the government during the king's minority, Richard's uncles not being included among the councillors appointed. The Duke of Lancaster acquiesced in these arrangements, but was careful to procure places in the administration for some who

¹ Lingard, iv. 164.

secretly obeyed his direction. The Parliament, which soon assembled, contained the members who formed the opposition to the Duke in the preceding year, and Sir Peter de la Mare, whom he had imprisoned, was again speaker.

But when the Archbishop of Canterbury, after setting forth Richard's claims, requested the advice of Parliament on the best means of preserving the national honour with least burden to the nation, the Commons protested their inability to give advice, and asked the aid of twelve peers, headed by 'my Lord of Spain'—the Duke of Lancaster. Richard having signified assent, the duke arose, bent his knee to the king, and alluded to the evil reports by which he had been slandered; he had been charged with what amounted to treason, he demanded that his character should be cleared from aspersions which he could not patiently endure. Let his accusers come forth, and he would meet them in single combat, or in any way that the king and his peers might award.¹ This speech created considerable ferment. The prelates and Lords entreated the duke to be pacified. The Commons joined with them in asserting their belief that the duke was guiltless of the evil alleged against him. Had they not so believed, they declared they could not have requested his counsel. The duke at last consented to let the past be forgotten, provided a severe law were passed to restrain those who might circulate similar falsehoods in future.

The duke, who had before befriended that Alice Perrers whose evil influence obscured the close of the late king's life, now abandoned her cause. She was arraigned before a committee of peers, under an Act which prohibited women from trafficking in the king's courts, and was condemned to banishment and forfeiture of property.²

The truce with France having expired before Edward's death, Charles V. had immediately sent out fleets to ravage the English coasts; Hastings was burnt, and the merchants were aggrieved by the cessation of commerce. Notwithstanding the late reconciliation, the Commons showed distrust of the Duke of Lancaster by promising the appointment of two London merchants—John Phillpot and William Walworth—as treasurers to receive the supply which they granted for defraying war expenses. They had good reason for trusting the

¹ 'This speech is entered on the rolls, probably at the demand of the duke.'—Jingard, iv. 166. The whole scene was probably prepared for his justification.

² She married Lord Windsor the next year, and obtained a reversal of the sentence. Godwin's 'Life of Chaucer.'

citizens in preference to the duke. Lancaster, after receiving the whole of the last subsidy, led an army to the siege of St. Malo, and spent a few weeks before the town, but returned to England without fighting the French. About the same time the Scots violated their truce by invading England, the warfare being chiefly carried on by private adventurers on both sides. One Mercer, a Scot, carried off a fleet of merchantmen from Scarborough; but Phillpot equipped a small squadron at his own expense, took Mercer prisoner, and captured sixteen Spanish vessels. Phillpot was received in London by his fellow-citizens in triumph, but the council reprimanded him severely for having levied war without the royal permission.¹

The constant demand for fresh supplies inclined the government to conciliate Parliament by a concession which was considered a signal victory. The public accounts were laid before a committee of finance, consisting of nine persons of different ranks, who were allowed to investigate the state of the revenue, and the way in which the estate of the late king had been employed.² Large subsidies were granted, but the supply was still deficient, and in an evil hour the plan of a capitation tax was devised, graduated according to rank, but including all, however poor, above mendicants. Accordingly, in the last month of 1380, Parliament imposed a poll-tax of three groats per head on every person of fifteen years of age; providing that in cities and towns no person should pay less than one groat, or more than sixty, for himself and his wife.

The Parliament was immediately dismissed, but great excitement prevailed in the country, and the collection of this tax occasioned a tremendous insurrection which, for a time, threatened the destruction of order in the realm. The spirit of independence had been lately manifested in several countries of Europe, and those villeins who in England still continued bound by feudal obligations had in many places formed associations for mutual support, and were ready to make use of any possible expedient to free themselves from the control of their lords.³ A Kentish priest, called John Ball, denounced the rights of property and the distinctions of rank, repeating the lines—

When Adam delved and Eve span
Where was then the gentleman?

¹ Lingard, iv. 169. It is not said whether this citizen was the same to whom, with William Walworth, the care of the subsidy had been entrusted. See also Hallam, ii. 191.

² Hallam, p. 193.

³ Lingard, pp. 173, 174.

And probably no one replied by comparing the advantage of civilised life with the existence of a savage.

At Dartford, in Kent, one Wat, a tiler by trade, was so enraged by the rudeness of the tax-collector to his daughter that he gave him a fatal blow. The discontent burst forth into open revolt, and spread rapidly through the neighbouring districts, until very soon a hundred thousand men gathered together under the tiler and John Ball. When the news reached London that Kent was in revolt, the royal troops were on the Scottish border, and the mass of the citizens apparently sympathised with the insurgents. The rebels pillaged the palace of the archbishop at Canterbury, and destroyed with especial animosity the houses of lawyers, but when they met the Princess of Wales, who was on a pilgrimage to Canterbury, they respected the widow of their late beloved prince, the mother of their king. They compelled Sir John Newton, governor of Rochester, and others of his rank, to join them, keeping these gentlemen as hostages. When they reached Blackheath they sent Sir John to the court, to entreat the king to come and confer with them, expressing their especial hope that he would come alone.

Sir John added to this message his own assurance that Richard need have no fear for his safety, as the insurgents respected the person and office of their king. The king promised a speedy answer, and summoned a council requiring the attendance of the lord mayor and principal London citizens. Richard appears to have had no personal fear, and it was agreed that he should meet the leaders next day on the banks of the Thames. Accordingly, the next morning, the king was rowed down the Thames as far as Rotherhithe, accompanied by the Earls of Salisbury, Warwick, and Suffolk. Upwards of ten thousand persons, who had come from the encampment at Blackheath, raised loud acclamations on beholding the young king, on hearing which the courtiers were so terrified that, although they had reached speaking distance, and Richard had asked the insurgents to state their demands, the Earl of Salisbury interposed, declaring that the leaders were not dressed fitly for an interview with royalty, and ordered the royal barge to be brought back to the Tower. Although there might have been some danger in landing amongst the insurgents, it was still more dangerous to exasperate them. After very short delay the rebels knocked at the gate on London Bridge, threatening, if they were not admitted, to destroy the beautiful

suburbs and to take the city by storm. Some of the magistrates sympathised with them, and the gates were thrown open. The insurgents, who were nearly famished, now rushed to the provision-shops. They got drink also, and then lost all restraint. They demolished Newgate prison and the palace of the Duke of Lancaster, burned the Temple, with the books and records which it contained, and set fire to the house of the Knights Hospitallers at Clerkenwell. The great animosity shown to the lawyers, whose calling, as set apart from the ecclesiastical office, might be named a new profession, appears to have arisen from villeins being often enumerated in the title-deeds of estates, which were drawn up by lawyers.¹ Hence the fanatic destruction of all public documents within their reach by the rebels. One ruling passion frequently excludes another. Although lawless and violent, the rebels were not covetous of gain; they destroyed the plate which fell into their hands, and on discovering that one of their associates had concealed a silver cup, they indignantly threw him and his booty into the river. They were influenced by ignorant hatred against the natives of Flanders, detected them by their pronunciation of particular words, and put them to death without mercy. The insurrection extended as far as the Humber, and in every place the insurgents took a similar course, exercising special hostility to all lawyers, and vowing that they would have no king of the name of John, which showed their antipathy to the Duke of Lancaster, whom they believed to have devised the poll-tax. Under these circumstances the Princess of Wales consulted with the ministers in the Tower. As the garrison was too weak to offer resistance to the immense multitude which thronged Tower Hill, it was thought safest to try conciliation, and a herald announced that the king would meet the people at Mile End. With courage surely as great as his father had displayed at Crecy, Richard rode from the Tower with a few unarmed attendants, and on reaching Mile End was surrounded by sixty thousand petitioners. A spokesman stated their demands to be the abolition of slavery, the reduction of the rent of land to fourpence the acre; the free liberty of buying and selling in all fairs and markets; and a general pardon for past offences. These terms were agreed to. A charter was prepared for every parish and township; thirty clerks were busied during the night in multiplying the copies, and next morning they were ready for

¹ Hook's '*Lives of Archbishops*,' iv. 289.

delivery. The men from Essex and Hertfordshire went home, bearing the king's banner as a sign of being under his protection.

But the possibility of a happy close to this formidable insurrection was frustrated by the frantic conduct of Wat Tyler and a ruffian priest called Jack Straw. In the king's absence these men rushed into the Tower and caused the archbishop, whom they hated because he was chancellor, Sir Robert Hales, Legge (the farmer of the tax), and others, to be led to immediate execution. The Princess of Wales was carried for refuge to a house in Carter Lane called 'the Royal Wardrobe,' where the king joined her. Three different charters are said to have been offered for Tyler's acceptance, all of which he contemptuously refused. The next morning Richard, riding through Smithfield with sixty horsemen, encountered Tyler, who was attended by twenty thousand followers. Tyler, stopping his course, rode up to the king, who readily entered into conversation with him. It was observed by the king's friends that, while talking, Tyler played with his dagger, and laid his hand on the king's bridle. Fearful that injury would ensue, the lord mayor, William Walworth, stabbed Tyler in the throat; Tyler spurred his horse, but fell to the ground, and was killed by one of the royal retinue. This violence might only have increased the king's danger had not he again shown extraordinary intrepidity. The followers of Tyler had already prepared their bows to revenge their leader's fall, when Richard galloped towards them, exclaiming, 'What are you doing my lieges? Tyler was a traitor. Come with me, and I will be your leader!'

The multitude followed the king into the fields of Islington, where a considerable number of men-at-arms had been collected for Richard's protection. Overcome by a sudden panic, some of the insurgents fell on their knees and begged for mercy. Many of the royalists now wished in their turn to execute vengeance; but Richard, with very creditable firmness, forbade retaliation, ordered the multitude to return to their homes, and by proclamation prohibited strangers from remaining in the city. Meantime, in the country the nobles had chiefly protected themselves from their villeins by retiring into their castles. The young and warlike Bishop of Norwich alone is said to have behaved with prompt resolution. Tranquillity was restored in the counties of Norfolk, Cambridge, and Huntingdon by this 'singular prelate,' Henry Spencer, who, clad in complete armour, led his followers to battle; after an engagement sat in judgment on his

prisoners; and in his priestly capacity prepared them for execution.¹

As soon as the death of Tyler was known, and that the insurgents of Kent and Essex had been dispersed, thousands were eager to testify loyalty, and knights and esquires flocked to London from all quarters to offer their services to the king.

Walworth, mayor of London, Phillpot, and two other citizens, received the honour of knighthood.

And now came the time for punishment. 'Such unhappy tumults,' as has been well said, 'are doubly mischievous; not more from the immediate calamities that attend them, than from the fear and hatred of the people which they generate in the elevated classes.'²

At the head of forty thousand horse, Richard issued proclamations revoking the charters of manumission so lately granted, commanding the villeins to perform their usual services, and prohibiting illegal assemblies. Dismay at the downfall of their hopes again produced attempts at insurrection, but the disaffected were put down, and many of the leaders executed, among whom were Straw and Ball, the itinerant preachers.

When addressing the peasantry of Essex after the execution of the rebel leaders, Richard is said to have used these bitter words: 'Villeins indeed you were, and you must remain in bondage, and that bondage shall now be made more ignominious for you to bear.' If he really uttered this, it must have been in anger, for Richard was more inclined to enfranchise the villeins than his Parliament were to allow him to do so. When the Houses met in 1381, the chancellor, after informing Parliament that the charters granting emancipation had been revoked, expressed the king's wish that they would consider the propriety of abolishing bondage altogether. But the great proprietors were averse to all concession, declaring that no power could legally deprive them of their villeins without their consent, and that they 'would never consent to it, were it to save themselves from perishing all together in one day.'³ Great exasperation was proved by some subsequent acts. By a very harsh statute passed in the twelfth year of this reign, no servant or labourer

¹ Lingard, iv. 181. 'The history of this insurrection,' says Lingard, 'has been transmitted, with many variations in the minor circumstances, by Walsingham, Knighton, and Froissart' (note to p. 181).

² Hallam, ii. 310.

³ Hallam, ii. 311; Lingard, iv. 183. Dr. Hook says that Parliament was convened 'to sanction the vilest act of perjury of which ever king was guilty' (iv. 341).

was to be allowed to leave the hundred in which he lived, even at the end of his service, without special permission under the king's seal, and a labourer who pursued husbandry up to twelve years of age was forbidden to change his calling. The House of Commons petitioned, a few years afterwards, 'for the honour of all the freemen,' which they apparently believed to be best maintained by the degradation of the class below them, that 'villeins might not be allowed to put their children to school in order to advance them by the Church.'¹ A complaint which was made in the same year, that villeins continually fled to the towns, whence their masters could not recover them, or were hindered in doing so by the people, shows a strong popular feeling in their favour, and the king refused to attend to these petitions. After this time villeinage is little mentioned in the public records, and it appears to have rapidly decreased. 'Perhaps,' says Hallam, 'a commission of Queen Elizabeth in 1574, directing the enfranchisement of her bondsmen on certain manors, upon payment of a fine, is the last unequivocal testimony to the existence of villeinage, although it is highly probable that it existed in remote parts of the country some time longer.'²

Although the insurrection was a political rather than a religious movement, yet the priest Ball passing for a disciple of Wyclif, whose followers continued to increase, the excitement was connected with the spread of his doctrines. 'A man,' says a contemporary writer, 'could not meet two persons on the road but one of them was a disciple of Wyclif.'

Wyclif translated the New Testament into English, a work which had not been previously completed, so far indeed as to make the book accessible to general readers. It seems strange to speak of publishing a book while no printing-press existed. Publication consisted in the dispersion of written copies, and Wyclif's translation was divided into small volumes for the convenience of the reader. The expense of the parchment, or paper, on which books were written, would have checked their general use even had the generality of men been able to read.

There is a copy of Wyclif's translation in Emanuel College, Cambridge, on the fly-leaf of which it is noted that the work

¹ A prohibition to this effect was among the 'Constitutions of Clarendon,' which Henry II. tried to enforce, and which Archbishop Becket opposed. This prohibition was based on feudal law. 'The lord had a property in his villein which he would lose by that villein's ordination.'—Freeman 'On the English Constitution,' p. 76, and note, p. 179.

² 'Middle Ages,' ii. 311, 312, and Turner's Hist., ii. 420.

was finished in 1383, that copy having been taken in 1397, and its value being ten shillings, which was then a large sum.¹ The question naturally arises—who were to be the readers? The ability to read well was at this time so rare that it betokened a clerical education, and gave to an accused person the privilege of being tried at the spiritual court instead of at the ordinary tribunal. Yet it appears that both Wyclif's writings and the early popular poetry were intended for unclerical readers.

Although this Parliament proved averse to conciliate the peasantry by granting their emancipation, the language which they held towards the king was unusually bold. The extravagance of the royal household is said to have exceeded that of any former king. The ten thousand persons who were accustomed to dine daily at the king's expense were served by three hundred attendants, and Richard took pride in the rich array of his followers. The House of Commons insisted that the late insurrection had been excited by the burdens imposed by the profligate Court, the exactions of the royal purveyors, and the evils arising from the 'maintainers of suits.' Although the feudal system was declining, the nobility still continued to exercise undue influence by means of the number of their retainers; entered into associations in support of litigation; and in courts of justice armed parties occasionally prevented their adversaries from appearing. To guard against this abuse, an Act was passed in the twentieth year of this reign, prohibiting any lord, or other person, from sitting on the bench with the judges of assize.² While the House of Commons prayed the king to reform 'all the bad practices which led to the last rising,' the Peers also declared in Parliament that, as it seemed to them, 'reform should begin with the chief member, the king himself, and so go on from person to person, as well churchmen as others, not sparing any degree.' In consequence of these bold remonstrances, commissioners were appointed to undertake reforms, but their advice appears to have been soon neglected. In the counties palatine of Cheshire and Lancashire, which were beyond the reach of the king's writs, the law was still more openly defied by 'maintainers,' who made inroads into the adjoining counties, and occasionally carried off the daughters of men of property, in order to exact large sums of money.³

The session of Parliament ended with a subsidy and a general pardon, both for those who had acted illegally in repressing

¹ Lewis's 'Life of Wicliffe,' p. 218. The name of this Reformer is variously spelt, Wyclif or Wicliffe.

² Hallam, ii. 295, 296, and note.

³ Lingard, iv. 183, note.

the late insurrection, and for the remaining body of insurgents. The latter grace is said to have been granted at the request of the amiable princess who had just arrived in England to become the royal bride. Although only a youth of sixteen, the king soon after Christmas married Anne of Bohemia, daughter of the late Emperor of Germany, whose popularity among the people gained for her the general appellation of 'the good Queen Anne.' She was a friend and patroness of Chaucer, and appears to have looked with favour upon Wyclif, who afterwards described the beautiful MS. copy of the Gospel which he had seen in the queen's hands, containing, besides the Latin, translations into the Bohemian and German languages. Many Bohemians came to England to pursue their studies at Oxford after the royal marriage.¹

At this period there were two rival Popes. Clement VII. was acknowledged by France and by Scotland, which usually sided with France, England adhering to Urban VI. From their respective residences, Rome and Avignon, the rival pontiffs launched anathemas, and preached up crusades against each other.² Urban encouraged the warlike bishop of Norwich to lead an expedition into France. The attraction of a crusade, which was given to this expedition, induced many ladies to contribute to it gifts of jewels and plate, but although the bishop promised indulgences to those who engaged in it, needy and desperate men alone volunteered in the service. Gravelines was, however, taken by assault, and the bishop defeated an army of 12,000 men; but when the King of France advanced at the head of much greater forces, the English mutinied, and the bishop returned hastily to England, where he was charged with having received a bribe from the enemy and with returning before the expiration of the service. Being unable to clear himself satisfactorily, he was deprived of his preferment until he had paid fines to the king.

Archbishop Courtenay summoned a synod of clergy to consider twenty-four sentences extracted from the works of Wyclif, which were declared open to censure, and ten were condemned as heretical. The archbishop succeeded in placing on the rolls of Parliament an ordinance authorising sheriffs of counties to arrest persons who preached or advocated heresy, and to detain them in prison until they should justify themselves before the Church. The Commons subsequently complained that this sta-

¹ After the death of Queen Anne, in the year 1394, several of Wyclif's writings are said to have been taken to Bohemia by her attendants, which prepared the way for the German Reformation. See Lewis's 'Life of Wicliffe,' and Pauli's 'Old England,' 267 and 311.

² The words of Lingard, iv. 186.

tute had not been granted by them, adding that it was contrary to their intention to bind themselves or their descendants more stringently to the bishops. Although the king gave a favourable reply, the 'pretended statute' remained, and '*still remains*,' says Hallam, 'unrepealed, except by desuetude, and the different spirit of later acts.'¹ Wyclif was compelled to leave Oxford, although he had many friends there. He retired to his parsonage at Lutterworth, where he still continued his studies and his efforts to reform the abuses of the Church, until he died of palsy on the last day of 1384. The modern Catholic historian acknowledges that Wyclif was exemplary in his morals, and that he declaimed against vice with the severity of an apostle.² It was some time before the Established Church determined to treat him openly as an enemy. Four years after his death a commission was sent to Oxford to carry off all the writings left by Wyclif and his friends, and to forbid, in the king's name, that any person should hold or defend his opinions, or keep, copy, or sell any of his works, under penalty of the loss of property and imprisonment. Thirty years more passed away before, under Henry V., religious bigotry triumphed in the violation of the peaceful churchyard, and Wyclif's ashes were cast into the neighbouring brook.

The instances of Richard's intrepidity related in the beginning of his reign promised well for his future strength of mind, and his personal advantages confirmed the popular partiality. But these happy signs were reversed as he approached manhood, and his reign was, after this period, a series of errors and misfortunes. Richard had from childhood dreaded the ambition of his uncle, the Duke of Lancaster. Distrusting those who ought, from near relationship, to have been the supporters of his throne, he chose favourites of less elevated rank, whose promotion was deeply resented by the nobler families. The chroniclers give little help in disentangling the intrigues of this unhappy reign.³ In July, 1385, Richard first appeared at the head of an army and invaded Scotland. The Scots were assisted by France; but the English army was very large, and, as usual, the King of Scots avoided an engagement. Edinburgh, Perth, and Dundee were burned to ashes; meantime the Scots and their allies crossed the border, and boasted that the destruction in Cumberland and Westmoreland more than balanced that effected in Scotland by the English. The king's uncles, the Earls of Cambridge and Buckingham, were made Dukes of York and Gloucester, and invested with the sword and coronet of state. Henry of

¹ Hallam, ii. 220; 'Life of Wicliffe,' p. 113.

² Lingard, iv. 192.

³ Hallam, ii. 197; Lingard, iv. 197.

Bolingbroke, son of the Duke of Lancaster, and Edward Plantagenet, son of the Duke of York, were made Earls of Derby and Rutland. Richard hoped that the distribution of these honours would conciliate his relatives towards his favourites, Robert de Vere and Michael de la Pole, then created Earls of Oxford and Suffolk. To check the supposed ambition of his uncle Lancaster, he declared his cousin Roger, son of that Earl of March who had married the daughter of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, heir presumptive to the throne. The Duke of Lancaster, who, from having married a daughter of the dispossessed King Pedro, had been for years called the King of Castile, maintained his claim to that inheritance. In the year 1385 he raised an army to assist the King of Portugal in an expedition against the reigning Prince of Castile. Glad to see his uncle employed on a foreign enterprise, Richard gave him half the supply voted by Parliament for the year, and presented him with a crown of gold, Queen Anne likewise bestowing a crown on the duchess. The expedition was not prosperous, but a marriage took place between the duke's daughter and the young Prince of Castile, and their children reigned in Spain for many generations. The temporary removal of Lancaster did but further expose Richard to the designs of his younger uncle, Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, more able and turbulent than Lancaster, who fomented the discontent of the nobility, and became the most powerful subject.

Richard's extravagance and love of pleasure, reinforced by the greed of his courtiers, left him always needy and dependent on Parliament. In 1386, when the French threatened to invade England, Richard appealed to Parliament to pay the expenses incurred for defending the country. But Parliament interposed the request that the king would dismiss his obnoxious ministers, and especially the Earl of Suffolk, the lord chancellor.

Richard answered, with his usual intemperance, that he would not dismiss the meanest scullion from his kitchen at their bidding. But Parliament haughtily suspended business while awaiting a satisfactory reply, and the Duke of Gloucester did not scruple to remind the king of that terrible example, 'of no remote date,' when, as he asserted, it had been considered lawful to expel from the throne a sovereign who would not govern according to the laws and the advice of the peers.¹ Thus intimidated, Richard no longer opposed the will of Parliament, or of his uncle. Suffolk was removed from office and impeached on charges of having received sums illegally from

¹ Hallam, ii. 199.

the king, of defrauding the revenue, and affixing the Great Seal without warrant to charters and pardons. Although these charges were but partly substantiated, he was sentenced to forfeit what he had wrongfully obtained, and to be imprisoned during the king's pleasure. He was released on the dissolution of Parliament, and Richard received him again into favour.

The king's opponents soon obtained a more signal triumph, compelling his reluctant consent that for one year the administration should be confided to fourteen persons, including the Dukes of York and Gloucester, and others of high rank and office. Threats of severe punishment were published against any persons who might venture to disturb these 'Commissioners' while exercising their delegated authority. Richard, on dismissing Parliament, entered a protest against any past acts being allowed in future to weaken his prerogative. During the year of his suspension from government, he added to his partisans by repeated journeys to the North of England, and obtained from a council of judges at Nottingham an opinion that the Commission he had authorised was illegal, and the Earl of Suffolk blameless. To this declaration the judges affixed their seals, and great secrecy was enjoined respecting it; but the Duke of Gloucester was speedily aware of the proceeding. Richard next endeavoured to obtain a more favourable House of Commons, desiring the sheriffs to raise the 'posse comitatus' against the barons, and to allow the election of no knights but those whom he and his council approved. The sheriffs replied that the 'posse' were all on the side of the nobles, and that the counties would choose their knights according to custom. Disappointed in this attempt, Richard summoned all the troops at his command, and determined to try military force.¹ Sir Nicholas Brembre, who had thrice been lord mayor, undertook to gain over the citizens for the king's party; and when, a few days before the tenure of the Commission expired, Richard entered London, he was received with unusual signs of attachment, being attended to St. Paul's and Westminster Palace by a great multitude. But the Duke of Gloucester was already advancing upon London with the Earls of Arundel and Nottingham, at the head of 40,000 men, declaring that their object was to rescue the king from the influence of traitors. These noblemen, joined by the Earls of

¹ Turner's 'History of England.' The authorities quoted are 'the Monk of Evesham' and Walsingham. The sheriffs were empowered by law to raise the 'posse comitatus' (literally, power of a county), all the inhabitants capable of bearing arms, either to repel invasion, or to preserve the peace during a sedition, or to apprehend traitors.

Derby and Warwick, appeared in Westminster Hall on Sunday, November 17, where, according to custom, they bent the knee before the king, who was seated on the throne. Richard arose, gave to each his hand, and bade them present their petitions. After assurances of loyalty, they brought the charge of treason against the Archbishop of York, the Duke of Ireland, the Earl of Suffolk, Sir Robert Tresilian (whom they called a 'false justice'), and Sir Nicholas Brembre, the London magistrate so favourable to the king, whom they called a 'false knight.' All the five nobles threw down their gauntlets and offered to make good their accusation by single combat.

To obtain at least delay, Richard promised that justice should be done in Parliament, that both parties should have his protection, and invited them to partake of refreshments. He endeavoured to lull the suspicions of the accusers while the Earl of Suffolk escaped to France and the Duke of Ireland enrolled troops under the royal banner. The duke was encountered by the noblemen at Radcot Bridge, and he saved his life by swimming across the Thames, escaping shortly afterwards to Holland.¹

Already the Duke of Gloucester, in connection with the Earls of Arundel and Warwick and Lord Mortimer, had consulted the clergy and the law authorities whether he could legally proceed 'to depose Richard, and take the crown under his own custody.' But the Earls of Derby and Nottingham, although willing to proceed to the execution of the king's favourites, refused to deprive Richard of the crown.²

Although the Duke of Gloucester could not proceed to depose Richard, he deprived him during the next year of all authority; and the Parliament of 1388, to which the names were given of 'the Wonderful,' and sometimes of 'the Merciless Parliament,' fully deserved the latter title. It was fruitless for the king to consult 'the sages of the common and civil law' whether the Bill of Impeachment framed against his ministers was valid. When they declared it to be totally illegal, the peers maintained that England had at no time been governed by the civil law, refused to be guided by the practice of the law-courts, and the king was compelled to assent to their declaration that the appeal was justified by parliamentary law and usage.³ Sir Robert Tresilian, late chief justice, who had decided against

¹ Radcot is near Bampton, in Oxfordshire. De Vere, Duke of Ireland, was also Earl of Oxford. He died in exile in 1392.

² Lingard, iv. 214, with reference to the charges afterwards brought against Gloucester.

³ *Ib.* 216.

the legality of the Commission of Government, and Sir Nicolas Brembre, the late lord mayor, were hurried off to execution.

Other judges, who, when convened at Shrewsbury and Nottingham by the king, had declared that those who ventured to supersede his authority committed treason, were impeached of treason by the Commons, and were not allowed justification on the plea that their answers had been extorted by threats from the king.¹ The cruelty of the Duke of Gloucester was extended to four knights, Richard's earliest and most faithful friends, whom he directed the Commons to impeach. The principal of these was Sir Simon Burley, who had belonged to the court of Edward III., had been chosen by the Black Prince to be Richard's guardian, and had negotiated the king's marriage. The warmest attachment, it is said, existed between the king and Burley; and Queen Anne knelt before Gloucester, adding her prayer to her husband's entreaties that his life might be spared. Even the Earl of Derby, one of the accusers, pleaded for Burley, but no consideration could soften the duke, and he repeated to the king the brutal threat that the security of his crown depended on the execution of his friend.² After suspending his decision for three weeks, Richard assented to the judgment convicting Burley of having conspired against the late Commissioners of Government. Three other knights suffered death, the charge against Sir John Salisbury being that he had consented to go to France to solicit the French king's favourable intervention.

Before this merciless Parliament began its acts of vengeance, the Duke of Gloucester, after the usual homage to the king, complained that he had been accused of aspiring to the crown, to which Richard replied by declaring his belief in his uncle's innocence. The last Acts of this assembly were intended to secure their own persons. Previous attainders were constituted irreversible by the sovereign, after which the last Act runs as follows: 'Whereas several points had been declared treason,' which had not been so formerly, judgment should not henceforth take place otherwise than 'before their proceedings.' They compelled the king to repeat his coronation oath; the prelates and lords renewed their fealty and homage; and all swore

¹ Lingard, pp. 210-217.

² Sir Simon Burley had become very obnoxious to the Kentish insurgents, having laid claim to a burgher of Gravesend as a bondman, and refused to free him for less than £300. Rochester Castle was taken by the rebels, and this man obtained his freedom.

never to allow any judgment given in that Parliament to be reversed, nor any statute repealed.¹

During nearly all the succeeding year the Duke of Gloucester retained his ascendancy; but the terror which he had inspired diminished, and offers of assistance from various quarters encouraged Richard, in May, 1389, to make a sudden effort to regain authority. At a great council held after Easter, he unexpectedly addressed to his uncle an inquiry concerning his age. 'Your Highness,' replied the duke, 'is in your twenty-fourth year.' 'Then,' continued the king, 'I must certainly be old enough to manage my own concerns. I have been longer under control than any ward in my dominions. I thank you, my Lords, for your past services, but require them no longer.' Richard took the seals from the Archbishop of Canterbury, gave them to the prudent William of Wykeham, and informed the people by proclamation that he had assumed the direction of government, intending to maintain the late statutes, and that he would suspend claiming subsidies until urged by necessity. For some years the country enjoyed tranquillity. The war with France was suspended; the Duke of York and the young Earl of Derby possessed the king's confidence, and when the Duke of Lancaster returned to England, he for a time formed a link between the hostile parties. Parliament gratified Richard by passing a declaration that his prerogative stood as high as that of any of his predecessors; and the 'pretended statute' deposing Edward II., which had been repeatedly held before Richard by his uncle of Gloucester, was repealed.² But the ascendancy of Lancaster soon re-awakened Gloucester's enmity, and the extravagance of the Court occasioned fresh complaints in Parliament, followed by proofs of Richard's arbitrary temper.

The 'good Queen Anne,' to whom both the king and the nation were affectionately attached, died at Richmond in July, 1394.

To divert his melancholy, Richard was advised to visit Ireland, which he had placed some years before under the charge of De Vere, Duke of Ireland, whose plans for tranquillising the island had been defeated by the dissensions between the king and Gloucester. Continued animosities prevailed between the uncivilised natives and the needy English adventurers who resorted thither. The petty chieftains submitted to Richard's authority; he promised them his protection, and

¹ Lingard, iv. 221. The judgment upon Burley was reversed in the next reign, giving 'a fair presumption of its injustice.'—Hallam, ii. 204.

² Hallam, ii. 205.

appears to have taken steps to reconcile the Irish to the superiority of the English settlers.

Richard was desirous of cultivating an alliance with France, and after the death of the queen proposed to marry Isabella, daughter of Charles VI., although she was only a child in her eighth year. The Dukes of Lancaster and York approved the connection, but through Gloucester's opposition the negotiation was delayed till November, 1396, when Richard sailed to France to bring back his child-bride. The marriage was solemnised at Calais by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the young queen was crowned at Westminster in January. Emboldened by favourable circumstances, Richard angrily required an explanation of the Commons' recent complaints, and demanded the name of the member who had dared to raise them. The Commons had prepared a list of grievances: undue retention of the sheriff's office, neglect of the Scottish boundary, disregard of the statutes against followers, and the excessive extravagance at Court. But being, in this instance, unsupported by higher influence, they surrendered their bill and its proposer, Thomas Haxey, to the king, with great professions of humility. Richard, well satisfied by their obsequious conduct, nevertheless caused a law to be immediately passed signifying that any person who should move the Commons to make reformation of anything appertaining to the king's person or rule, should be held a traitor; and, *two days after* the making of this law, to meet the occasion, Haxey was condemned to suffer as such. Haxey, however, was fortunately a priest, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the head of the prelates, obtained as a special favour that his life should be spared and the Church be allowed to take him into custody.¹

Having thus asserted his arbitrary power in open defiance of the privileges of Parliament, Richard proceeded to assail more formidable enemies.

The Earl of Warwick, immediately after dining with the king, was arrested and hurried to the Tower, whence for greater security he was removed to Tintagel Castle, in Cornwall. The Earl of Arundel likewise, after an invitation unsuspectingly given by his brother, the primate, to a conference, was carried off to Carisbrooke Castle, in the Isle of Wight. Great as had been the provocation given by the Duke of

¹ The title 'Sir,' given to Thomas Haxey, shows him to have been the parson of a parish, then regularly called 'Sir.' We find thus that clergymen sat in the Lower House. See Hallam, p. 11; Lowth's 'Life of Wykeham,' p. 119, and Lingard, iv. 237, note. What right has the last writer to doubt the peril threatened to Haxey, 207-208?

The Duke of Norfolk was led to suspect that the king's apparent friendship towards him was feigned, and that Richard had not forgotten his conduct in 1387, when Earl of Nottingham. He imparted his suspicions to Hereford, and Hereford divulged them to the king, accusing Norfolk of disloyalty.

The difference which arose between the dukes was referred to the new committee of Parliament; Norfolk surrendered on proclamation, and in the king's presence denied the allegations of Henry of Lancaster, Duke of Hereford. With the consent of his committee the king referred the controversy to a high court of chivalry of the barons and knights of England assembled at Windsor, and it was determined that, as no witnesses could be summoned, both noblemen should abide the wager of battle on September 16, at Coventry. On that day, in the king's presence, that of the committee, and of an immense multitude, the combatants entered the list. Hereford had already pushed his shield forward and fixed his lance, when the king threw down his warder, 'taking,' according to the language used on these occasions, 'the battle into his own hands,' and forbade a conflict which must ruin one of two persons, both allied to him, and both of whom bore his arms. Anxious suspense followed, till Richard, after pretending to consult the committee, made known his pleasure that to preserve the public tranquillity and prevent private quarrels, the Duke of Hereford should go into exile for ten years, notwithstanding he at the same time declared that in prosecuting the appeal Hereford had acted honourably.

The judgment upon Norfolk was severe. He was ordered to go as a pilgrim to the Holy Land, and to remain in exile for the remainder of his life in Germany, Hungary, or Bohemia; he having, as the king alleged, excited dissension and opposed the repeal of the Acts passed in the Duke of Gloucester's Parliament. 'This strange determination,' says Hallam, 'which treated both as guilty,' 'seems to admit no other solution than the king's desire to rid himself at one blow of two peers whom he feared and hated.'¹ Shakespeare describes this scene in the first act of *Richard II.*, attributing the rancour of Hereford and Lancaster against Norfolk to the part that duke had taken in the destruction of Gloucester.² The Duke of Norfolk, after visiting Jerusalem, was believed to have died

¹ Middle Ages, ii. 211.

² *Duke of Norfolk*.—'For Gloster's death,
I slew him not; but to my own disgrace,
Neglected my sworn duty in that case.'

Richard II., act i., scene 1.

at Venice of a broken heart, and John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, did not long survive his son's exile. Richard now further decreed that Hereford's exile debarred him from the inheritance of his father's large estates. On the duke's departure from London he received the good wishes of a large multitude, and this fresh injury to one who had not been accused of crime raised him still higher in the favour of the nation. Richard had taken the surest way to convert an ally into a rebel. The king had now thrown aside all appearance of moderation; in fact, he seems to have been mainly actuated by desire of revenge. Although he had granted a general pardon, he extorted money from seventeen counties on the plea of former rebellion, compelled men to confess themselves guilty of treason, to give blank obligations which his officers filled up with large sums, and required Gloucester's former adherents to purchase fresh charters of pardon. Such proceedings must inevitably awaken the determination to take the first opportunity of shaking off so galling a yoke. At this time the news arrived that the Earl of March, the king's cousin and appointed heir, had been slain in Ireland. Blind to the immediate danger in England, Richard resolved on an expedition to revenge his death. Anxious to perpetuate despotism, Richard had asked the judges whether it were in his power to bind his successor to pursue his policy, and had been told that it was impossible. But in a will signed a few days before his departure for Ireland, the king bequeathed the greater part of his personal property to his heir, on the express condition that he should ratify all the Acts of the 21st and 22nd years of his reign, desiring that otherwise the money should be employed by his executors in defence of the same policy, 'even, if it were necessary, unto death.'¹ Having appointed his uncle, the Duke of York, regent in his absence, Richard took leave of his young queen at Windsor, after attending solemn mass, and proceeded to Ireland, where he occupied himself in the pursuit of a rebel chieftain.

Meantime, Henry of Bolingbroke, late Duke of Hereford, and now of Lancaster, was joined at Paris by the exiled archbishop, with whom he had been expressly forbidden to associate. The result of their conference was a determination to return to England.

The Duke obtained three small vessels, embarked at Vannes with servants and a few friends, and landed at Ravenspurn, in Yorkshire, on July 4. Here he was immediately joined by the powerful Percys, Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland.

¹ Lingard, iv. 253, note.

In the abbey of the White Friars, at Doncaster, Henry made oath that his object in returning to England was only to recover the honours and estates of his late father.

The Duke of York immediately summoned the royal retainers to assemble at St. Alban's, but the king's partisans were apparently more solicitous for their own safety than to oppose Lancaster. They proceeded to Bristol to await Richard's return, while Henry marched on to London with an increasing number of followers, which soon amounted to sixty thousand men. He was preceded by adherents who explained the general grievances, and when he reached London he was greeted by a procession of the clergy and people, bringing addresses of congratulation and offers of service. Turning westward, he met the Duke of York at Berkeley. Henry and Richard were equally akin to York; the duke betrayed the trust reposed in him by joining the triumphant invader, and sealed the king's doom. At the regent's command the governor of Bristol Castle admitted the combined forces; and the Earl of Wiltshire and two other members of the committee of Parliament were executed.

It is said that tempestuous weather prevented the king from hearing of the invasion till a fortnight after Henry's landing. He heard the news with as much astonishment as alarm, and his delay in returning brought certain ruin upon his cause. A gallant host, collected at Conway for his defence, disbanded when, in spite of the entreaties of their commander, he failed to appear. At last, on August 5, Richard reached Milford Haven with a force of several thousands, which, had they been faithful, might yet have made a stand against the invader, but the greater part quickly dispersed. Himself a dissembler, the helpless king was in his turn betrayed by designing representations, and lured on by the Earl of Northumberland to Flint Castle, as he was assured, to await pacific proposals from Henry. Richard ascended the tower to watch for Lancaster's coming, but, when he beheld the army of eighty thousand men winding its way under Henry's standard up to the castle, he shuddered and wept. He was then summoned to receive Henry of Lancaster, who came before him in complete armour, but without his helmet, and twice he bent his knee. How different that meeting from the parting at Coventry less than a year before! 'Fair cousin of Lancaster,' said Richard, with polite dissimulation, 'you are right welcome.'

'My lord,' replied the duke, 'I am come before my time; but I will show you the reason. Your people complain that for the space of twenty years or more you have ruled them rigor-

ously. If it please God, I will help you to govern better.' The king is said to have rejoined, 'Fair cousin, since it pleases you, it pleases us likewise.' Courtesy on Lancaster's part went no further than words: two miserable horses were brought for the king and the Earl of Salisbury, who were compelled to ride in the triumphant duke's train to Chester. Writs were prepared in the king's name for assembling Parliament, and for the preservation of the peace. Henry dismissed the greater part of his army, and conducted his prisoner to the Tower of London. The principal prelates and nobility, and the mass of the people, were inclined to hail with satisfaction the elevation of Henry; but as 'the right of dethroning a monarch was nowhere found in the law,' it was thought desirable in the first place to induce Richard to abdicate the throne.¹ The rolls of Parliament attest that a deputation of the various orders waited on the captive king, reminding him that in Wales, *while perfectly his own master* (a falsehood, putting a false face on compulsion), he had promised to resign the crown, on account of his incompetency to govern. Richard offered no opposition; by a paper which had been prepared he absolved all his subjects from their fealty and allegiance, acknowledged his deposition to be just, and took oath that he would never act or encourage others to act in opposition to this resignation. Richard is said to have voluntarily added an assurance that if it were in his power to name his successor he should prefer his cousin of Lancaster, to whom he gave a ring from his own finger.

Such is the account of this transaction inserted by Henry's order in the rolls of Parliament, but of its accuracy there is great reason to doubt. Had the king been free, it is far more probable that he would have fled to his French provinces, instead of remaining in England exposed to the cruel fate of his great-grandfather.

The next day Parliament assembled in Westminster Hall amidst a large concourse of people. The duke took his usual seat near the throne, which was empty and covered with cloth-of-gold.

When the paper which purported to be Richard's resignation was read, every member stood up in his place signifying his assent to it aloud, and the people with repeated shouts testified their satisfaction. The coronation oath was next read, followed by thirty-three articles of impeachment, which explained that Richard had violated his oath, and by so doing had incurred the forfeiture of his crown. The articles which had most weight

¹ Hallam, ii. 213.

were his hand in the death of Gloucester, his having cancelled the pardons previously granted to the duke and his adherents, and his despotic conduct after the dissolution of Parliament. Another article, passed over by some historians, confirms the king's character for dissimulation, and proves the respect, even in that age, paid to honesty, viz. the complaint, 'that in his negotiations with foreign princes he had used so many equivocations and sophistries that none would take his word any more.'¹

No reply was expected to accusations which it was the interest of the new possessors of power to set forth in the blackest colours; but it is said that Marks, Bishop of Carlisle, rose, with extraordinary intrepidity, to declare that the right of being confronted with his accusers, which was granted to the meanest criminal, ought not to be withheld from the deposed king, and that Parliament ought to learn from Richard's own lips how far his surrender of the crown was voluntary. The only effect of this appeal was the bishop's own imprisonment.² Parliament voted Richard's deposition, and eight commissioners, ascending a tribunal placed before the throne, pronounced his degradation from the royal authority, on the ground both of his demerits and of his own act of resignation. Parliament waited in suspense till the Duke of Lancaster arose, and, after crossing himself with much solemnity, claimed 'the realm of England and the crown' by the right line of descent from Henry III., declaring that the realm had been 'in point to be undone for default of governance and undoing of good laws,' and that it was God's will that he should recover it. Thus did Lancaster artfully combine the plea of inheritance with the claims of conquest and expediency. He then produced the ring and seal which he had obtained from Richard. The archbishop led him to the throne and made a speech in his praise, and Henry promised not to 'disinherit any man of his heritage, franchise, or other rights,' except he were a disturber of the realm. The authority of Parliament legally expired on the change of the sovereign, but Henry summoned the same assembly to meet again in six days, appointed new officers of the Crown, and retired

¹ See Lord Bolingbroke's 'Letters on the Hist. of England.'

² The speech which Hume represents the bishop to have made is generally believed to be a fabrication.—Lingard, iv. 269, note; and *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 42. Shakespeare gives the bishop's speech in *Richard II.*, act iv., scene 1. On the discovery of the first conspiracy formed against Henry, Bishop Marks was tried for treason, and condemned; but the Pope interceded for him, and he at last obtained Henry's favour. See, further, Lingard, iv. 280.

in state to the royal apartments. Henry of Bolingbroke was King of England.

'In this revolution of 1399 there was as remarkable an attention shown to the formalities of the constitution, allowing for the difference in the times,' say Hallam, 'as in that of 1688.' Although far from extenuating the treachery of the Percys or the conduct of the chief men of that time—'most of whom were ambitious and faithless'—the same writer declares that, 'after such long experience of the king's arbitrary, dissembling, and revengeful temper,' it had unquestionably become necessary to expel Richard, although neither his successor nor the chief men of the time can be in any way extolled.¹

It has been mentioned that Sir Thomas Haxey owed his escape from death to his clerical character. The privilege of the sacred order to be tried in the spiritual court, which did not adjudge to death, is interesting, not only on account of the partiality thus shown towards the clergy, but as a sign of the general ignorance. At first, the prisoner who claimed 'benefit of clergy' was obliged to appear in his clerical dress and to show his tonsure; but this usage was afterwards omitted, and as reading was a rare accomplishment, it was held sufficient to ascertain that he could read, so that at length lay-clerks, as such persons were called in ancient statutes, came to share the privilege of clergy. According to Sir Thomas Smith, who published his 'Commonwealth of England' in 1565, the bishop sent a deputy to every gaol delivery to ascertain if any there were so entitled. Moreover, if a condemned prisoner 'demanded to be admitted to his book,' the judge handed him a Psalter. The prisoner then reading 'as well as he can (God knoweth sometimes very slenderly), the judge appealed to the bishop's commissary, saying "Legit ut clericus?" (Does he read like a clerk?) The commissary must thereupon say "legit," or "non legit," for our men of law are very precise in their words formal. If he say "legit" (he reads), the judge proceedeth no further to sentence of death; if "non," the judge forthwith proceedeth to sentence.'

¹ The right of inheritance legally belonged to the Earl of March, the son of the nobleman lately slain in Ireland. Philippa, the only child of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, had been married to the father of the late earl. But the present Earl of March was only ten years of age.

² 'Middle Ages,' ii. 212. Nearly three hundred years afterwards, to justify the deposition of James II., the roll of parchment was produced from the records 'on which, in quaint characters and barbarous Latin, it was recorded that the estates of the realm had declared vacant the throne of a perfidious and tyrannical Plantagenet.'—Lord Macaulay, ii. 600.

The privilege being intended only to protect the clergy, not for the encouragement of education, it was made an indictable offence to teach an offender to read in order to save his life. In the 7th year of Richard II. the vicar of Round Church, in Canterbury, was tried for having, with the jailor's connivance, instructed one William Gow, who had been previously unlearned. In the year 1455 (Henry VI.) the judges are said to have been perplexed to decide the fate of a felon who, although he read fluently, was declared by the Archdeacon of Westminster not to be a clerk. He was detained long in prison until another dignitary presided, who took a more favourable view of his case, when, on the ground of his good scholarship, he was transferred to the spiritual court, the judges declaring that they would allow any offender 'benefit of clergy' who could prove his fitness, if it were even under the gallows!¹

¹ See Blackstone's 'Commentaries,' vol. iv. chap. 28; and 'Penny Cyclopædia,' article 'Benefit of Clergy.'

CHAPTER XVII.

HENRY IV., SURNAMED BOLINGBROKE.

A.D. 1399-1413.

THE new king, who had already assumed the name of Henry IV., was crowned within a fortnight after the deposition of Richard, on the anniversary of the day on which he went into exile.

The sword worn by Henry when he landed at Ravenspurn in July was unsheathed by the Earl of Northumberland, the most powerful of his partisans, and borne conspicuous in the coronation procession. Parliament was obsequious to the royal will. All the late vindictive acts were repealed, and the king's eldest son was created Prince of Wales, Duke of Guienne, Lancaster, and Cornwall, and Earl of Chester. No one mentioned the little Earl of March, and the king was satisfied with detaining him and his brother at Windsor Castle. The harmony was, however, interrupted when the lords who had so lately accused the Duke of Gloucester and his associates of treason were summoned to justify their conduct. They grounded their defence on the commands and threats of the late king; but the dangerous words 'liar' and 'traitor' were bandied about, and on one occasion, concerning the Duke of Albemarle, son of the Duke of York, twenty lords cast their gauntlets on the floor as challenges to battle. The king, however, interposed to silence these passionate disputants, and it was judged expedient that the noblemen whose rank had so lately been raised by Richard when required to act as the instruments of his vengeance should again become Earls of Rutland, Kent, Huntingdon, and Somerset.¹ To prevent further vindictive proceedings, several useful statutes were passed, one of which

¹ Richard made Rutland Duke of Albemarle, in September, 1397, besides other promotions.—Lingard, iv. 246-276.

confined the guilt of treason within the limits assigned by the important Act of Edward III.

Before the end of the month, the Archbishop of Canterbury having enjoined secrecy, the Earl of Northumberland brought a message from the king, concerning the future treatment of the deposed monarch, whose life, as it was declared, the king 'was resolved to preserve at all events.' The lords advised that Richard should be secretly conveyed to some retired castle, where he might have no communication with the world or his friends. Accordingly, the king came down to the House and adjudged the unhappy Richard to total seclusion for the rest of his life.

During the Christmas holidays the late 'lords-appellants,' so lately lowered in rank, met together at a tournament at Oxford. They were already discontented with the new king, and planning to liberate Richard. But one of the associates failed to appear—the one who stood nearest to the throne—Rutland, son of the Duke of York. It is said that, being unable to conceal the plot from his father's knowledge, Rutland disclosed the secret to the king, who was consequently able to take prompt measures. While the king issued writs for the apprehension of the traitors, they were proving their treason by proclaiming Richard in several towns and villages in the West of England. At Cirencester, the mayor, fortified by the king's writ, raised the inhabitants to attack the noblemen, and in the middle of the night the Earls of Kent and Salisbury were beheaded by the people.

Lords Lumley and Despenser met the same fate at Bristol, and several other barbarous executions took place. Marks, the courageous Bishop of Carlisle, who had dared to lift up his voice for justice on behalf of Richard, was arrested as an accomplice of the conspirators, tried, and condemned to death as a traitor. For some time the king and the Pope held a controversy concerning his fate. The Pope, to save the life of Marks, had already named him Bishop of Cephalaria, in the isle of Samos; but Henry required that the bishop should be degraded and then executed. At last, however, Henry deemed it best to yield to the Pope, and signed his pardon. Marks died a few years afterwards, rector of Todenham, in Gloucestershire.

Richard's chance of continued life had been very slender, depending chiefly on the tranquillity of the country. If none had appeared to care for him, he might still have been permitted to drag on a passive existence. Like every other premature and

ill-planned conspiracy, this attempt strengthened the government, whilst it accelerated the doom of Richard.

The King of France threatened war; he resented Henry's late secret departure from France, and felt bound in honour to appeal on behalf of his young daughter's husband. The French people readily supported their king, and already troops were moving towards the coast, when Henry, to stop hostilities, sent a herald to Paris. But Charles returned a peremptory refusal to negotiate. He knew 'no King of England but Richard.'

Henry had already summoned the peers, and obtained their promises of assistance, when, at the end of January, the threatened war was suddenly averted by the news that Richard had died at Pontefract Castle. On this intelligence the King of France agreed to maintain the truce, and expressed anxiety only respecting the restoration of his daughter, the ex-queen, and her dowry.¹ Since the time when Richard was condemned to secret imprisonment, no one appeared to know his fate. The mystery might have still continued, had it not been for the interference of the King of France; but the Council now required that if Richard was indeed dead, his body should be publicly exhibited to the people. In March, 1400, a funeral train conveyed the remains of the late sovereign to St. Paul's, where, for two days, numbers of people were allowed to gaze on the emaciated face. Mass was celebrated, attended by King Henry, a dirge was chanted at Westminster Abbey, and the interment took place at Langley, 'Richard's once favourite residence.'²

Different reports prevailed concerning the king's death. In France it was generally believed that he died in his cell from the blows of Sir Piers Exton and his accomplices; but in England it was considered more probable that he was starved to death. Henry prudently abstained from noticing these rumours.

It appears inevitable that a political revolution in times of

¹ Isabella returned to France in 1401, and was subsequently married to the Count d'Angoulême. In 1402, however, a Frenchman, Walleran of Luxemburg, also a Prince of the German Empire, who had married a sister of Richard II., sent a challenge to Henry, King of England, concerning the death of that king, of which he was 'notoriously accused.' Walleran proved his hostility to the King of England, according to the too frequent usage of princes, by inflicting severe injury on the Isle of Wight and the southern coast of England, by means of a squadron of ships; and three French princes, who embarked in the same cause, burned Plymouth.—Lingard, iv. 311.

² Lingard. Probably King's Langley, in Hertfordshire, where Henry III. had a palace. Some persons maintained that the body exhibited at London was not that of Richard, but of a man who much resembled him.

imperfect civilisation should be stained by blood. All the massacres of the beginning of this reign are, however, of small significance when compared with that blackest of all statutes by the passing of which this king, conscious of his imperfect title to the crown, conciliated the Church. Eight hundred years earlier, when Augustine had converted Ethelbert to Christianity, he declared that religion ought not to be enforced by violence; but after these long centuries of advancing civilisation the Church, alarmed by the spread of Wyclif's doctrines, was no longer satisfied with shielding her sons from the secular arm. She now prepared to pronounce a doom more terrible by far than that of the gibbet upon those, however blameless, who dared to oppose the established belief. Archbishop Arundel, who was restored to the primacy, had been one of Henry's advisers before he landed at Ravenspurn, and was one of the deputation which brought the deceitful message to Richard at Flint Castle. A writ to legalise the burning of heretics had only awaited the royal signature, and Henry willingly surrendered the Lollards to persecution, thus lighting flames which were not finally extinguished for more than a hundred and fifty years. An execution soon followed. William Sawtre, rector of Lynn, in Norfolk, had been already deprived of his living, upon a charge of heresy. He was summoned before Convocation, sentenced, and publicly burnt to death in Smithfield, in the presence of an immense multitude, on February 26, 1401.¹ This act of barbarity did not, however, subdue the boldness of the Lollard preachers.

It had been charged upon the unhappy Richard that he added no military glory to England. Henry was desirous of escaping similar censure, and probably also thought that his nobles would be more safely employed in foreign war than at home.

Parliament was reluctant to impose new taxes which might cause discontent; but it was agreed by the prelates and peers in council to provide for an expedition into Scotland, the former yielding a tenth of their income, the latter serving with a certain number of soldiers, at their own expense, for a limited time.

On the pretext of summoning King Robert and the Scottish barons to do homage, Henry marched to Leith; but Edinburgh

¹ Lingard gives this date. Some say February, 1400. See Pauli's 'Old England,' p. 301. Lord Campbell states that Henry had at first desired to replenish the treasury from the superabundant wealth of the clergy, but that Archbishop Arundel offered strenuous opposition.—'Lives of the Chancellors,' i. 313.

Castle was held by the Prince of Scotland, and when the English army had consumed their own provisions, they found it expedient to regain the border.

An expedition into Wales proved equally fruitless. Owen Glendower, a Welshman, who had served in Ireland under the late king, had petitioned Parliament for redress against the encroachments of a more powerful neighbour. His petition was scornfully rejected, on which Glendower declared his lineal descent from the ancient princes, and set up the standard of rebellion. The Welsh eagerly admitted his pretensions, hoped, like the Scots, to re-establish independence, and adventurers joined them from the universities and the most distant parts of England.

Henry sent his son, the Prince of Wales, to oppose this pretender to royalty. The young Henry gave Glendower's house to the flames; but Glendower stood on the hills meantime, and still continued in arms. The conflict was long and desultory. Lord Grey and Sir Edmund Mortimer were taken prisoners by Glendower. When, after two more years of war, Henry collected his retainers at Shrewsbury and invaded Wales from different quarters with troops commanded by himself, his son, and the Earl of Arundel, no enemies appeared to meet him, and the violent storms which he encountered inspired a superstitious dread of the adventurer who appeared able to enlist the powers of nature in his service.¹

The charge of continuing the war in Scotland had been committed by the king to the Earl of Northumberland and his son, Sir Henry Percy, or 'Hotspur.' Henry was now alarmed by hearing that an unknown Englishman had appeared in Scotland who personated Richard II. Proclamations were issued against those who spread false reports, setting forth anew the charges against Richard, and several persons were convicted of treason. Meantime the pretender, who was probably insane, was kept by the Regent of Scotland a close prisoner in Stirling Castle for seventeen years till his death in 1419.

Irritated by a personal grievance, Dunbar, Earl of March, joined the Percys.² After the banks of the Tyne had again been cruelly ravaged, a great battle was fought on September 14, 1402, between the English and the Scots at Homildon Hill. The Scots were completely defeated by the English archers, and among the captives were the Scottish commander, Earl Douglas,

¹ Lingard, iv. 290. See Shakespeare's *Henry IV.*, in which the supposed magical influences of Glendower are described.

² The Scottish Earl of March must not be confounded with the young Earl confined in Windsor Castle.

Murdoch Stewart, son of the regent, and eighty French and Scottish knights. The English men-at-arms did not draw their swords; the victory was won by the archers alone, whose skill and strength were renowned throughout Europe. A stone which stands two miles from Wooler, near the Cheviot Hills, is believed to mark the battle-field.

On October 20 the Earl of Northumberland came before the king at Westminster Hall with his seven prisoners. Henry exhorted Prince Murdoch to bear his captivity with fortitude, remembering that he had conducted himself in battle as a true knight. He raised the prisoners from their knees and invited them to dine at his table. Henry's aid was now besought for the ransom of the two noble prisoners taken by Glendower. He willingly paid the demand for Lord Grey, but Sir Edmund Mortimer was the uncle of that Earl of March, the prisoner at Windsor, who was the lineal heir of the English crown. Henry refused to assist in Mortimer's liberation, although Henry Percy, who had married his sister, petitioned for the aid.¹ By this mean refusal to release a knight who had been taken prisoner in his cause, Henry gave deep offence to those powerful nobles who had helped to place him on the throne.

Mortimer, weary of captivity, married the daughter of Glendower, became consequently Henry's avowed enemy, and was secretly supported by extraordinary confederates—the three Percys (the Earl of Northumberland, his son, and the Earl of Worcester), Scrope Archbishop of York, and Earl Douglas, who promised to pay for his freedom by his own services, and by bringing the assistance of a number of knights.

It was required by the laws of chivalry that subjects who cast off their allegiance should state their grounds of provocation. The confederates accordingly sent Henry a written act of defiance, pronouncing him false and perjured on the following grounds—that on first landing in Yorkshire he had declared that he only claimed his lawful inheritance, whilst he had afterwards compelled Richard to resign the crown; that, having solemnly promised protection to Richard during his life, he had caused him to die of hunger and cold in the castle of Pontefract; that he had taken possession of the crown, the rightful inheritance of the young Earl of March; that, although he had promised to govern according to law, he had levied taxes by his own sole authority, and had illegally interfered with elections by sending

¹ See *Henry IV.*, act i. scene 3.

King Henry.—'Shall our coffers, then,
Be emptied to redeem a traitor home?'

his creatures to Parliament. To these charges it was added that he refused to allow the liberation of Sir Edmund Mortimer, who was taken prisoner in his service, and that he accused the Percys of treason, when they were only negotiating for Mortimer's release. 'For these reasons,' concluded the defiance, 'we do mortally defy thee and thy adherents, as traitors and subverters of the commonwealth, as oppressors and usurpers of the rights of the true and direct heir of England; and we intend to prove it by force of arms.'¹ Henry Percy, lieutenant of North Wales, had considerable influence in that district, the Earl of Worcester brought forces from the south, and the archers of Cheshire were deluded by the assurance that Richard, to whom they were personally attached, still lived.

Henry, who was in the centre of England when he first heard of this impending danger, immediately summoned those on whom he could rely, and entered Shrewsbury at the moment when the younger Percy was approaching at the head of the confederates. Although Owen Glendower had not yet brought up his Welshmen, Percy made immediate preparations for battle. On reading the defiance, Henry made answer that he had not time to write a reply, but would prove by the sword that the charges brought against him were 'false and feigned.'

The battle which was fought the next morning, July 21, was one of the most bloody contests described in English history. The two armies were nearly equal in number, each consisting of about fourteen thousand men of approved valour.

When they stood in battle array, Henry sent the Abbot of Shrewsbury to offer terms of peace, which, after some hesitation, were rejected.

'Then, banner advance!' cried Henry. The air resounded with the king's cry of 'St. George!' to which 'Espérance, Percy!' was the reply, and the archers on both sides did great execution with their arrows. Percy and Douglas, two of the most valiant of living knights, till lately foes in the field, but now allies, rushed into the thickest conflict, and for a time triumphed over all opponents. The royal guards were routed, the noblemen who for deception had adopted the royal arms were slain, the Prince of Wales was wounded. But an arrow pierced the brain of Henry Percy; when he fell the confidence of his followers fell with him. The king, who had been fighting bravely in a distant part of the field, soon felt secure of victory. The Earls Douglas and Worcester and two others of high rank were made prisoners. Douglas

¹ This defiance is printed at length from the Harleian MSS. in 'The Hereditary Right of the Crown.'—Lingard, iv. 298.

was treated with courtesy; the others were executed as traitors. The Earl of Northumberland, who had been detained by indisposition, was marching through the county of Durham at the head of his retainers, when he heard of the great defeat and the death of his son and brother; upon which he disbanded his forces, and secluded himself in Warkworth Castle. At the next meeting of Parliament, Northumberland presented a petition to the king, acknowledging that he had transgressed the law by collecting his followers, but hoping for mercy in return for his submission. Henry could not wish to inflict extreme punishment on a powerful and popular nobleman who had helped to place him on the throne; he invited the judges to decide on the earl's offence. But the lords, many of whom had been secretly in the same league, interposed an opinion that Northumberland's guilt went no further than a trespass, punishable by a fine. The earl was allowed to renew fealty to the king and the rest of the royal family, and obtained a full remission of fines and penalties, and the House of Commons thanked the king for pardoning Northumberland.¹ Disaffection did not, however, cease. The families of those who had been slain or executed as traitors thirsted for revenge, and the king found it difficult to replenish his treasury without exciting fresh ill-will.

In the beginning of the year 1404, Lady Despenser, widow of one of the noblemen who perished at Bristol in the first insurrection, contrived to enter the apartments at Windsor Castle, in which the young Earl of March and his brother were confined, and carried them off to the frontiers of Wales. Alarm was, however, raised in time for the recapture of the fugitives, and the lady, when examined before the council, named her brother, the Duke of York, as an accomplice in her attempt. The duke, who had lately inherited his father's title, was the same nobleman who, when Earl of Rutland, revealed to Henry the first conspiracy formed on behalf of Richard. Henry seized the duke's estates and confined him for three months in Pevensey Castle; but York stood too near the throne for punishment, and he was soon reinstated in his possessions. The proud Earl of Northumberland had been very leniently treated, but, although pardoned, he felt himself degraded. He was deprived of the guardianship of the Scottish border, a slight which his proud spirit ill-brooked from the king whom he had assisted in gaining the throne. He found a willing associate in Lord Thomas, eldest son of that Duke of Norfolk (Henry's opponent in the lists in 1398) who died in banishment.

Hallam, ii. 224, note.

To avoid exciting Henry's jealousy, Lord Thomas had not assumed the title of Duke of Norfolk, and was known as Lord Mowbray, the earl marshal. When, however, Henry bestowed on the Earl of Westmoreland the office hitherto hereditary in the Mowbray family, the resentment of Lord Thomas was aroused, and he held conferences with Scrope Archbishop of York, an enthusiastic supporter of the young Earl of March. With the concurrence of the archbishop, a paper was affixed to the doors of the churches at York, containing charges against the king similar to those presented to him at Shrewsbury. Eight thousand men assembled in May, 1405, at Shipton-on-the-Moor, near York, where they were joined by the archbishop and Lord Mowbray. Prince John and Lord Westmoreland brought forces against them, and, without a battle, contrived to gain possession of the archbishop and the earl marshal, and to take them to the archiepiscopal residence at Bishopsthorpe, where the king had arrived with the Court. The insurgents, on the seizure of their leaders, quickly dispersed.

Henry commanded the Chief Justice Gascoigne to pronounce sentence of death on the archbishop and the earl; but that upright judge refused to execute the command, declaring that he could not legally judge those who had a right to be tried by their peers.¹ A more compliant agent was found in a knight named Fulthorpe, who, without form of trial, condemned both to death. The archbishop is said to have been generally beloved and respected both for his learning and his virtues. He submitted to the execution with fortitude, and was venerated by the people as a martyr.² When Henry afterwards appealed to the Peers in Parliament to brand the acts of the archbishop and earl as treason, they replied, with independence, that, although according to Prince John's testimony their offence appeared to be treason, they requested that the subject might await the consideration of the next Parliament. Henry had the prudence not to press for further judgment respecting the most iniquitous act of his reign, with the exception of Richard's death. After punishing the city of York by depriving the citizens of their franchises, Henry advanced against the Earl of Northumberland, with thirty thousand men. Unable to offer resistance, the earl allied himself with the Regent of Scotland, and for more

¹ Lingard, iv. 305. The privilege of clergy which still existed in criminal cases 'was acknowledged not to comprehend high treason.' The Pope, however, afterwards excommunicated all who were concerned in the archbishop's death, and Henry was obliged to pay a large sum for absolution.—'Middle Ages,' ii. 50.

² The archbishop was brother of Richard's minister, the Earl of Wiltshire, put to death at Bristol in 1399.

than two years wandered, with his companion Lord Bardolph, from place to place, sometimes with the Scots, at other times among the Welsh insurgents.

At length Northumberland fell in battle near Tadcaster, defeated by Sir Thomas Rokeby; and Bardolph died of his wounds. The conclusion of the English insurrection furnished larger resources for conducting the war in Wales; but four years passed before Prince Henry was entirely victorious over the southern province, while in North Wales Glendower continued to roam among the wilds of Snowdon long after the death of Henry IV.¹

In March, 1405, the heir of the Scottish throne fell unexpectedly into Henry's power. Robert III., the weak King of Scotland, suspicious of his brother the Duke of Albany, desired to place his only surviving son, Prince James, at the Court of France. Although at that time there was no war between England and Scotland, an English cruiser ventured to intercept the passage of the young prince, who was offered to the King of England as an acceptable present, and Henry was not so magnanimous as to surrender him. To the expostulations addressed to him he is said to have replied that he could teach the prince to speak French, and was as able as the King of France to instruct the heir of Scotland how to govern. No further aggressions on the part of Scotland took place during this reign and the next—the whole period spent by James in captivity in England. Henry was not, however, a negligent guardian: he appointed Sir John Pelham, a man of worth and learning, as his governor, and James (who was only fourteen when captured) became well acquainted with such branches of literature and art as were at that time cultivated by gentlemen. In the seclusion of Windsor Castle he became a lover and a poet, and the poem composed by him in praise of the Lady Jane Beaufort, whom he afterwards married, has been extolled for its taste. When, in 1424, James was at length restored to Scotland, the laws which he enacted did honour to his English education and rendered memorable his short reign of twelve years.²

France was at this time divided by the turbulence of hostile factions. In November, 1407, the Duke of Orleans, brother of Charles VI., was murdered in the streets of Paris, and the Duke

¹ Lingard, p. 310.

² See Ellis's 'Specimens of Early English Poetry,' i. 242, and Sir Walter Scott's 'History of Scotland,' i. 240. Scotland was in the utmost disorder when James became king, and he was slain by a conspiracy of those haughty barons whom he too rashly endeavoured to overcome.

of Burgundy acknowledged that he had instigated the deed. The Orleanists, disappointed in their claim for justice, took arms, and France was divided between Burgundians and Orleanists.¹

It might have been thought that England had happily no part in such dissensions. But the King of England viewed King Charles as his enemy. He sent a thousand archers and eight hundred lances to assist the Duke of Burgundy. But the heads of the rival party made tempting offers to Henry, promising to acknowledge him as the rightful Duke of Aquitaine, to restore to him those portions of which the English had been deprived, and to do homage to him for what they held within the duchy.

Tempted by such offers, Henry promised large assistance to the opponents of Burgundy. There were, however, patriots in both the French armies who dreaded the arrival of the English, and were anxious to end the strife. Means were taken to bring about a reconciliation, and although in the year 1412 Henry's second son, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, had landed in Normandy, and the English had begun the work of plunder, the Duke of Orleans purchased their forbearance, and they marched forward to Guienne.² In England Henry soon lost the popularity which he had enjoyed at his accession, and his difficulty in raising money, and the frequent insurrections, made him more compliant towards Parliament than he might otherwise have been.

In the fifth year of his reign the Commons, supported by the Lords, petitioned that certain persons, among whom was the King's confessor, should be removed from the Court; and although Henry came to Parliament to intercede for these persons, he acquiesced in their dismissal, saying that he would not retain any person in his Court who incurred the ill-will of his people.³

Although severe laws were passed for the repression of heresy, the rolls of Parliament during this and the succeeding reign are full of petitions against church abuses, some objecting that priories were held by foreigners, and a regulation was

¹ The name 'Armagnacs' was given to the Orleanists, from the title of their chief, the Constable d'Armagnac.

² The King of France had previously ordered all his forces to assemble at Chartres for the defence of the kingdom, when in the meantime the Duke of Orleans agreed to pay the English general 209,000 crowns.—Lingard, iv. 317.

³ Hallam, ii. 225. Henry must have remembered the ill effects of Richard's refusal of the demands of Parliament in 1386.

made that no child under fourteen years of age should be admitted into a convent without the parents' consent.

An Act repressing the delusive attempt to change the common metals into gold was passed, and it was declared to be felony. The philosophers who pursued this vain experiment were called alchemists; they are severely reproached by Chaucer in the tale of the 'Canon Yeoman,' who attributes his ruin to this endeavour by which

A man may lightly learn, if he have aught,
To multiply and bring his good to nought.¹

Sir Thomas Chaucer, Speaker of the House of Commons during this reign, was the poet's eldest son.

Henry, Prince of Wales, was eleven years of age at the time of his father's accession. After the battle of Shrewsbury, the king required from all the lords and prelates a renewal of allegiance, and in February, 1404, procured an act vesting the succession to the crown in his sons according to seniority.

The Prince of Wales, although very popular on account of his bravery and generosity, was nevertheless reckless and inconsiderate, and when disengaged from military service abandoned himself to his pleasures.

The praise repeatedly bestowed on him by the Parliaments which remonstrated with his father, and his steady application to the work of subduing Glendower, have induced some historians to discredit the stories of his petulance in early life.² Shakespeare may have added exaggeration to the reports of the chroniclers, as also in the case of Falstaff, a character now known not to be historical. According to the popular story, one of Prince Hal's companions was charged with felony and taken before Chief Justice Gascoigne, who sent him to prison, an exercise of authority which so incensed the prince that, when his demand for the release of his friend was refused, he became so violent as to strike the judge on the bench. Gascoigne immediately committed the prince to prison, and he had the prudence to submit quietly to the sentence. The king is said to have very sensibly exclaimed, on hearing of this occurrence, that he was 'happy to have both a judge so resolute in his duty and a son so obedient to the authority of the law.'³

¹ See lines 845-846 of Clarke's 'Riches of Chaucer,' and note at p. 306. The whole process of the experiment is there described.

² See Hallam's remarks, ii. 228, note.

³ Shakespeare's assertion that Henry V. re-appointed Gascoigne, with praise for his conduct (*Henry IV.*, part ii. act v.), has been contradicted in Foss's 'Lives of the Chief Justices.'—See 'Quarterly Review,' No. 238.

This was the same chief justice who refused illegally to sentence Archbishop Scrope.

The king, who had been for some time declining in health, died on March 19, leaving four sons—Henry, who immediately succeeded him, Thomas Duke of Clarence, and the Princes John and Humphrey, besides two daughters, married to the Duke of Bavaria and the King of Denmark.

When, after his Scottish victory, the Earl of Northumberland brought prisoners of high rank to kneel before the king, they are said to have prayed that they might be treated 'honourably and graciously, according to the law of arms.' It was still usual to torture prisoners of war, to procure from them a larger ransom. Thus Henry was charged with having allowed Sir Edmund Mortimer to be kept in chains. The infliction of the 'peine forte et dure'—the pressure of heavy weights laid on prisoners, who were stretched on the floor of the cell—must have frequently brought on death; but, as death without sentence did not deprive heirs of their inheritance, some prisoners bore this painful treatment rather than seek a public trial.¹

Lingard, iv. 299, and Palgrave's 'Illustrations,' pp. 269, 270.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HENRY V.

A.D. 1413-1422.

THE Prince of Wales—called from his birthplace Henry of Monmouth—succeeded to the throne. Although his frank and cordial manners had made him popular, the graver part of the community regarded with anxiety the accession of a prince who had lately been guilty of riotous excesses. But Henry's prudence dissipated their fears; his idle associates were dismissed, and prudent men were summoned to his counsels.

He liberated from prison the young Earl of March, and restored to the exiled son of Henry Percy, called 'Hotspur,' the estates and honours which his father and grandfather forfeited by rebellion. Henry also paid to the late unfortunate Richard, from whom he had received knighthood, the only possible tribute of respect, by causing his remains to be removed to Westminster Abbey and by attending in person at the ceremony with some ostentation of regard.

Several years had now elapsed since, in 1401, the fires of Smithfield were first lighted for the execution of a heretic. It is related that, while Prince of Wales, Henry's compassion was strongly excited on behalf of a poor mechanic, with whom he condescended to expostulate respecting his errors; but the man being unconvinced by his arguments, he left him to his fate.¹

Among Henry's early friends was Sir John Oldcastle, who had served with credit in the French war, and was also a man of learning. By marriage with Lady Cobham, Oldcastle acquired her title and a seat in the House of Lords. He became zealous in disseminating the doctrines of Wyclif, attributing to them his own moral reformation, translated some of the

¹ The contemporary poet, Occleve, wrote verses describing Prince Henry's compassion for the poor smith. Turner's Hist. ii. 469, and Pauli's 'Old England,' p. 307.

reformer's writings, and caused the Bible to be read to the villagers at his house in Kent, where many persecuted preachers found a refuge. A tract sent by him to Paternoster Row to be illuminated was discovered by an emissary of the clergy. The contents were made known to the king, who declared his disapproval, and endeavoured to rescue his friend from the hostility of the bishops by persuading him to relinquish these dangerous errors.

Henry's arguments, however, again proved unavailing, and in his displeasure he left Lord Cobham to defend himself against the archbishop. He was brought before an ecclesiastical court held in the Dominican monastery near Ludgate. In reply to his accusers, he asserted his belief in the Scriptures, but declared his disapproval of the high claims set up by the Church, and his veneration for Wyclif, to whose influence he ascribed his own improved character. He was sent to the Tower, from which he contrived to escape, and took refuge in Wales. Soon afterwards there was a tumultuous gathering of men from all parts of England, who met by night in St. Giles's Fields, with the intention, as it was reported, of seizing the king and his brothers, and of making Oldcastle regent. Although Oldcastle was not present at this meeting, and some of the most careful historians have considered the apprehensions of the government unsupported by evidence, the object of the clergy was attained: '*Lollardy*' was made treasonable, and the magistrates were desired to take all possible measures for its suppression. Oldcastle, after living in concealment for more than three years, was at length captured by Lord Powis, and, on his condemnation by the peers, was executed with peculiar barbarity, being hung by a chain from a gallows in St. Giles's Fields, and burnt to death by a fire kindled under him.¹ The enemies of Oldcastle were not satisfied without attempting to cast reproach on his character; and as he had been one of Henry V.'s early companions, before the improvement ascribed by himself to Wyclif's influence, it has been assumed that the portrait of Falstaff, drawn by Shakespeare more than a hundred and fifty years later, was based on the popular descriptions of one who, excepting in stoutness, had no similarity to that sensual and cowardly knight. It is believed that the name of Oldcastle was first given to the 'Sir John,' in the play of *Henry IV.*, but that Shakespeare, finding

¹ Turner's '*History of England*,' ii. 471; Vaughan's '*Life of Wycliffe*,' p. 495; and, for the following observations on Shakespeare's play, Mr. Gairdner's article in vol. xiii. of the '*Fortnightly Review*.'

it unpopular to assail the reputation of one honourably mentioned in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs,' substituted 'Falstaff,' apparently derived from the name of Sir John Fastolf, 'a notable warrior' in the reign of Henry VI., who at one time was unjustly calumniated for cowardice. A passage of the epilogue to the 'Second Part of *Henry IV.*,' speaking of Oldcastle, 'who died a martyr,' implies that the name had been changed.

A ballad, written by a contemporary poet, affords proof of the ridicule cast on Sir John Oldcastle soon after his death:—

It is unkindly for a knight,
That should a king's castle keep,
To babble the Bible day and night,
In resting-time when he should sleep.

And—

To creep from knighthood into clergy,
That is a bitter blast yblown,
To be bold of Lollardie—
I trow there be no knight alive
That would have done so open a shame;
For that craft to study or strive,
It is no gentleman's game.

The care with which the king's approval of the severities inflicted on the Lollards was announced, adds to the suspicion that he had at first been favourable to them. Thomas Nutter, a Carmelite prior, accused Henry, indeed, of apathy in their prosecution. To avert the censure, or to remove the accuser, Henry sent him, with his ambassador, the Earl of Warwick, to declaim against heresy at the Council of Constance, where John Huss, rector of the University of Prague, and his disciple Jerome, were condemned to perish in the flames. The safe-conduct which the Emperor Sigismund had previously granted them was treacherously violated, on the ground that those who maintained heresy were unworthy of any privilege.¹

There were other dangers besetting the Church then established in England. Politicians who would have agreed with the ballad-writer that it did not befit them 'to creep from knighthood into clergy,' yet looked with eager eyes on the Church property; and the petition which had been presented in the last reign was renewed, that the value of the landed property 'devoutly given and disordinately spent by religious and other spiritual persons' might be applied to the maintenance of knights and esquires for the honour and defence of the realm, to build-

¹ Turner, iii. 139; Hallam, i. 463, and ii. 47. This great council was assembled at Constance in the year 1414. A great number of the higher clergy, and nearly all the sovereigns of Europe, were there, either in person or by their representatives.

ing almshouses for the poor, and towards the royal revenue. To guard against the impression to be expected from these petitions, the heads of the clergy resolved, it is said, 'to replenish the king's brain with some pleasant study;' and in order to excite Henry's desire of military glory the Archbishop of Canterbury reminded him of the futile claim to the inheritance of the crown of France which had been set up by his great-grandfather, Edward III.¹

It was urged by the Earl of Westmoreland, Lord Warden of the Border, that the conquest of Scotland should be first attempted, being both more easy and more necessary. But the Duke of Exeter, the king's uncle, replied that Scotland was 'a country almost barren of all pleasure and goodness,' whilst France was 'fertile, pleasant and fruitful, with rich cities, and people civil, witty, and of good order.' The Archbishop of Canterbury assured Henry of his right to renew the pretensions of the English monarchy, and the popular cry was soon heard, 'War, war! France, France!' so that the bill proposed in Parliament for dissolving religious houses 'was clearly forgotten and buried.' But before the beginning of hostilities the Duke of Exeter and several other persons of rank were sent to Paris, where they were hospitably entertained by the French Court with feasts and tourneys.² It seems a strange conclusion of the festivities to hear that the English ambassador demanded from the hospitable sovereign the surrender of all the richer portions of his realm, declaring that King Henry would willingly remain at peace provided he could obtain the hand of the Princess Catherine in marriage, with those provinces once held by the English as her dowry, and still further requiring a large sum of money, said to be due from France to England, the arrears of the ransom of King John of France. Such demands must have appeared to the French utterly unreasonable, and only temporary weakness can have prompted their return embassy, which offered to Henry the hand of the Princess Catherine, so boldly claimed, with a dowry of eight thousand crowns, and an offer of all the provinces which had formed the duchy of Aquitaine. But the young King of England was bent upon conquest.

The late king is said to have advised that peace should not

¹ See Shakespeare's *Henry IV.*, scene i., in which the computations and arguments are taken with exactness from Hall's Chronicle. 'The Rolls of Henry IV.'s and Henry V.'s Parliaments,' says Hallam, 'are full of petitions against the clergy.'—*'Middle Ages,'* ii. 49.

² Lingard mentions the Earl of Dorset and the Bishop of Durham and Norwich, accompanied by a retinue of 600 horsemen—a magnificent embassy, which astonished the French (v. 8). They attained their object, an extension of the truce preparatory to war.

be prolonged, being apt to lead to dangerous commotions. It was well 'to busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels.' Charles VI. of France was subject to attacks of mental weakness which made him unable to fulfil the royal duties, and France was agitated by hostile parties. Determined to profit by his rival's weakness, Henry demanded the whole of the territories which his ancestors had held; adding that the throne of France was his by right, and that he would wrest it from its present unjust possessor. These words aroused the indignation of the French ambassador, who replied that it would require more power than England possessed to shake the throne of France, and that Henry's presumption would cost him dear. Henry, who meant to carry on the war in the spirit of chivalry, did not resent the ambassador's freedom, and dismissed him with presents. The Duke of Bedford, one of the king's brothers, was appointed regent during Henry's absence. All the barons and knights who were eager for fame or royal favour agreed to furnish their contingents of troops, and Henry pawned his jewels, solicited loans, and by great exertions collected five hundred thousand nobles. The preparations for this great undertaking were suddenly interrupted by news of a conspiracy against the king's life, hatched by some of his trusted adherents, with the view of transferring the crown to the Earl of March as the rightful heir. The king's cousin, Richard, lately created Earl of Cambridge, was the head of this conspiracy, and was executed after trial by his peers. The Earl of March sat among the judges, and was declared free from offence.¹ On August 13, Henry sailed from Southampton. His first act was to besiege Harfleur, a strong fortress on the Seine, which surrendered after a brave resistance of nearly five weeks. The king seated himself on a throne, erected on a hill opposite the town, to receive the homage of the vanquished. He commanded the men-at-arms to give themselves up to the governor of Calais, and allowed the other inhabitants, who left the town, to carry with them a supply of clothing, and receive each a gift of fivepence to purchase food. Henry's design was that Harfleur should be peopled by English, and its riches were divided among the soldiers. This successful commencement of the war intoxicated the English with new dreams of conquest in France; but this enterprise had cost the lives of so many soldiers, and the army was so much reduced by sickness, that it was with a full sense of the difficulty of his undertaking that Henry resolved on pushing

¹ Lingard, v. 10. The origin of this conspiracy is left in doubt.

forward to Calais. Meantime a large army had assembled in Normandy under the Constable of France, and in the presence of the French king it was debated in council at Rouen whether or not to give battle; the decision being that the invaders should be crushed if possible, and orders were sent that every ford on the river Somme, over which Henry's troops must pass, should be well guarded. Henry, however, succeeded in finding a safe passage for his troops, and it was not till the English approached the village of Agincourt that they discovered the neighbourhood of the enemy, whose force is said to have numbered, at the least, fifty thousand men.¹ The French were also well supplied with provisions, whilst the English had been suffering from scarcity; but the memory of the victories of Crecy and Poitiers, won in like difficulties, encouraged the hope of another success. Henry having drawn up his troops on a narrow ground between two woods, patiently awaited the attack of the enemy. Watchful over all, the king is described as going through the ranks and encouraging his followers, and when one of the officers exclaimed that he wished they could have the aid of some who lay idle in England, Henry declared that he wanted no further aid; for if he gained the victory, it would be by God's goodness, and, should they be defeated, the loss would be the loss to their country.²

Henry placed the archers, on whom he had the most reliance, before the men-at-arms. The great reputation of the English marksmen, and their savage appearance—nearly without clothes, that they might the better use their bows—struck terror among the French. The French nobility led the charge with impetuous valour, relying on their superior numbers, but were hindered by the clay soil, which late rains rendered nearly impassable for cavalry, and great havoc was made amongst them by the archers, who had erected palisades to break their onset. Confusion and dismay soon prevailed in the French army, and the rout became complete. On hearing that the unarmed followers of his camp were attacked by French peasants, Henry hastily ordered that his prisoners should be put to death, but he afterwards stopped the slaughter and rescued the greater number. No battle had ever been more fatal to France. The Constable of France, the Archbishop of Sens, three dukes and seven counts were among the slain. Many illustrious Frenchmen were taken prisoners, amongst others the Duke of Orleans, whose son, King Louis XII.,

¹ Hallam, i. 69. The English being only 15,000. Lingard states that the French army doubled that number. The Duc de Berri had advised the French to avoid an engagement: fifty-nine years before he had been in the battle of Poitiers, and consequently knew something of the danger.

² See Shakespeare, *Henry V.*, iv. 3.

was afterwards detained in England for twenty years in honourable captivity. Henry immediately proceeded to Calais with his prisoners, and embarked for England. So great was his haste to quit the country after his victory, that he did not stay to conclude a truce. It was on the feast day of St. Crispin, October 25, 1415, that this great battle was fought, a day ever glorious in military annals, but which brought no real advantage to our country, except the extrication of the king and army from great immediate peril. The delight and exultation of the English people were unbounded. When the king's vessel approached Dover, a crowd pressed into the sea to meet him, and Henry was borne by his eager subjects in triumph to the beach. He was escorted to London by a triumphant procession; Lords, Commons, the clergy, all had assembled in honour of their victorious monarch, the walls of the houses were hung with tapestry, and the whole people appeared to be intoxicated with joy.¹

Parliament, sharing the general enthusiasm, voted a large subsidy, and, with less than their usual prudence, even granted the king a subsidy on wool and leather for life; but the continued expenses of the war caused Henry still to call them together nearly every year.² An interval of nearly two years passed before Henry again invaded France. That country continued in a lamentable state of anarchy, and when, on August 1, 1417, Henry invaded Normandy with sixteen thousand men, it was as the ally of the Duke of Burgundy, who was favoured by the unprincipled queen, and who headed one of the great parties then dividing the kingdom. It was in vain that Henry called on the Normans to receive him as their lawful duke, the descendant of Rollo; they looked on him as a foreign adventurer, and defended their country with great bravery; but the disorders of the time deprived them of their usual leaders, and before the end of the spring all Lower Normandy had been reduced by the English.

In July, 1418, Henry laid siege to Rouen, the capital of Upper Normandy, which, before its numbers were reduced by the dread of a siege, was said to contain two hundred thousand persons. The fortifications were strong, and the French confi-

¹ Shakespeare gives the historic narrative thus:—

‘The mayor, and all his brethren, in best sort,
Like to the senators of the antique Rome,
With the plebeians swarming at their heels,
Go forth, and fetch their conquering Cæsar in.’

Henry V., act v. (Preliminary Chorus.)

² Hallam, ii. 219.

dently hoped that this city would resist the English arms. Fifteen thousand trained citizens of Rouen were assisted by four thousand men-at-arms under the command of an able officer. But famine soon made cruel ravages in the besieged city, and fifty thousand of the inhabitants are said to have died from want and disease before they petitioned the French court for speedy relief. Help was promised and earnestly expected, but it came not, and the despair of the garrison at length overcame the governor's determination. Having asked for terms of capitulation, which were refused, the governor proposed to his men to fire the city and attack the English camp, that they might at least sell their lives dear to their enemy. Henry heard of the design and prevented its execution, wishing, if possible, to save the city. He gave the soldiers their lives and let them go free, on condition that they pledged themselves not to serve against him for twelve months, and, after receiving a large contribution from the citizens, allowed them to retain their privileges and the rest of their property. The fall of Rouen was felt to the utmost extremities of France; but it was not the loss of this great city, or the terrible battle of Agincourt, but the factious disputes of the princes which reduced that fine country to the most deplorable wretchedness. In July a negotiation was entered upon between these princes, the Dauphin and the Duke of Burgundy, who bound themselves to live henceforward in amity, to take measures for the tranquillity of the kingdom, and to unite their forces against the King of England, who was the enemy of France. Only two months had elapsed after this seeming reconciliation when the Dauphin requested the duke to meet him at Monterau-sur-Yonne. The Duke of Burgundy attended the summons, although not without misgivings. He had bent his knee and was addressing the Dauphin, when he received a blow on the face, was beset by many assailants, and slain.

This base and treacherous murder, apparently unprovoked, and believed to have been instigated by the Dauphin, had the natural effect of exasperating the partisans of Burgundy to frenzy. The city of Paris abjured the respect due to the legitimate heir of the crown, and a solemn oath was taken by all ranks to revenge the death of the duke. Duke Philip of Burgundy, the son of the murdered prince, solicited Henry's assistance, and Queen Isabella, who had been previously estranged from her son's interests, assured him of the powerless king's ready acquiescence in his wishes. Under the immediate influence of blind party hatred, every consideration of patriotism or

family ties appears to have been forgotten; subjection to a foreign sovereign, the expulsion of the lawful heir, the slavery of the kingdom, all appeared small evils, if they led to the gratification of revenge.¹

The King of England, says a French historian, had been engaged three years in the conquest of Normandy; the death of 'Jean sans Peur' seemed to give him in three days the entire kingdom

The glittering prize which had stood so long before the eyes of the Kings of England appeared at last within the grasp of Henry V. He named his terms: the hand of the Princess Catherine; the regency of France during the life of the present king, and subsequently the inheritance of the crown; and the queen and the duke agreed to these conditions. By after-arrangements, Henry promised Catherine the usual income of an English queen (thirty thousand nobles), engaged to conquer the provinces which remained in possession of the Dauphin, agreed to allow a French Council to assist him in the government during his regency, also that the title of King of France should be still retained by Charles VI., and that all corporate rights should be respected and justice administered according to the laws of France. On May 20, 1420, this memorable treaty was ratified at Troyes, then the residence of the Court of France, the queen and Duke Philip acting as commissioners for Charles; the Parliament, nobles, citizens, and commonalties of northern France, all engaged to obey the authority of Henry, and the union of the two crowns was declared to be settled by terms of 'perpetual peace.' Shortly afterwards the marriage of Henry and Catherine was celebrated, and 'the Regent and Heir of France,' with his beautiful bride, left Troyes to resume military operations against those towns which still resisted his sway. At the approach of winter the kings and queens made a triumphal entry into Paris, where Henry was well received. The King of France summoned the three estates of the kingdom, explained the reasons which had led him to conclude a 'final and perpetual peace with his dear son the King of England,' and laid before them a copy of the treaty, which received their approbation. The Duke of Burgundy appeared before this assembly in deep mourning, and demanded that the assassins of his father should be brought to justice. The king declared them

¹ Hume, and Hallam, i. 70.

² Michelet, vi. 206. The appellation of John the Fearless was ordinarily given to the Duke of Burgundy, who had, thirteen years previously, caused the assassination of his rival, the Duke of Orleans.

guilty of high treason and deprived of all feudal privileges, but no person was named as guilty of the crime. In February, 1421, Henry conducted Catherine to London, where he was again received in triumph, and the queen was crowned with greater magnificence than had ever been exhibited on a similar occasion in England. The royal pair began a progress through the country, and had reached York, when disastrous news arrived from France. The Duke of Clarence, whom Henry had left as his lieutenant, having undertaken to reduce Anjou, which still recognised the Dauphin, had been surrounded by a more numerous force of French, assisted by Scots, and was slain on the field of battle, his force having suffered considerable loss.

Henry immediately prepared for another expedition, and, in especial wrath against the Scotch auxiliaries, determined that men of that nation should form a great part of his army. James, the young King of Scotland, who had passed sixteen years in England in captivity, was induced to join as a volunteer. The campaign was successful, and the two sovereigns again showed themselves at Paris at the Whitsuntide festival. The Parisians gazed at the magnificence of the English Regent, but beheld with sympathy the comparative insignificance of their own sovereign, and the pageantries which Henry had provided for their amusement did not prevent their raising murmurs.

It is said that when his son was born, in December, 1421, Henry expressed a doubt whether the young 'Henry of Windsor' would reap the rich inheritance of his conquests. Disease was now making sad progress in the king's constitution, and, having by the end of July lost the hope of recovery, he entered, as well as he was able, on the settlement of his affairs, deeply solicitous to guard his infant son from the evils of a long minority. He appointed the Earl of Warwick to be his son's tutor, and the Duke of Gloucester guardian of the kingdom. He conjured his confidential friends to conciliate the friendship of the Duke of Burgundy, and to offer him the regency of France; but in case of his refusal desired that it might fall to his brother, the Duke of Bedford. Henry expired at Vincennes, near Paris, on the last day of August. The king's body was conveyed to Rouen, where it lay in state, and from Rouen to Calais, where a fleet was waiting to transport it to England. Extraordinary respect was shown to the remains in every district through which the procession passed, the nobility and princes attending, and the King of Scots appearing as chief mourner. Queen Catherine followed at a league's distance, attended by a numerous retinue. When the procession approached London it was met by all the

chief authorities, which had repeatedly done honour to their victorious king. The obsequies were performed, in presence of the whole Parliament, first in St. Paul's and then in Westminster Abbey, which was the last abiding place. Shakespeare has described Henry V. as a merciful conqueror, who recommended that the conquered country should be treated with justice: 'For when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner.'¹ Many acts of severe vengeance were nevertheless perpetrated in the course of the war. The early historian Hall gives Henry great praise for rectitude, as well as for the qualities most prized in a soldier. 'No cold made him slothful, nor heat caused him to loiter. He was no more weary of harness (armour) than of a light cloak. He was never afraid of a wound, nor ever sorrowed for the pain. Every honest person was permitted to come to him sitting at his meal, and to declare his mind and intent.' Henry was 'loved throughout his life,' says Hallam, 'as so intrepid, affable, and generous a temper well deserved; and this sentiment was heightened to admiration by successes still more rapid and dazzling than those of Edward III. During his reign there was scarcely any dissatisfaction testified in Parliament.'²

Before the day of Henry's interment at Westminster, the King of France had ended his life. 'The populace at Paris wept for their poor weak king as much as the English for their victorious Henry V.,' says a French historian. Charles VI. was carried to the royal cemetery of St. Denis, attended merely by his chamberlain, his chancellor, and other officers of his court. Only one prince followed in the train—the Duke of Bedford! The only remaining son of the deceased monarch was disinherited and proscribed.

When the body was consigned to the tomb the officers in attendance broke their wands and reversed their maces. The chief herald then exclaimed, 'May God have mercy on the soul of the very high and very excellent prince, Charles, King of France, sixth of the name, our natural and sovereign lord!' He then added, 'Long life to Henry, by the grace of God King of France and England, our sovereign lord!' upon which there were responsive shouts. The infant Henry VI., thus declared to be the mighty lord of two powerful kingdoms, recently united, was less than a twelvemonth old, and, on his mother's side, the heir of imbecility.³

During the two years succeeding the treaty of Troyes,

¹ Act iii. 6.

² Hallam, ii. 228.

³ Michelet's 'History of France,' vi. 244, and Turner, 484.

Henry V. governed the North of France in the name of Charles VI. with unlimited authority. The central provinces, with Languedoc, Poitou, and Dauphiné, remained faithful to the son of Charles VI.

France was totally exhausted by the long continuance of civil war and the incursions of the English, and many of the cities in the northern provinces were falling into poverty; while in London the citizens who had been gaining wealth assisted both to pay their sovereign's debts and to found magnificent institutions.

The fame of the successful mercer, Richard Whittington, has spread far and wide, with its pleasant addition of fable. He thrice filled the office of Mayor of London, and was knighted, it is said, by Henry V., to whom he had lent much money for the French war. He erected several public buildings, besides endowing alms-houses, which still bear his name. The figure of Whittington, carrying the cat which formed so conspicuous a part of his legendary history, was carved in stone on the archway of the old prison built across Newgate-street, and said to have been erected by him, which was taken down in 1780.¹

¹ The antiquarians had failed to find a clue to the tale of Whittington's early life (see Stow's 'Survey of London,' and Keightley's 'Tales and Popular Fictions'); it has recently, however, been suggested by Professor Max Müller. After mentioning one or two inadequate explanations, the Professor continues:—'There is a Persian historian of the name of Wassáf, who lived in the beginning of the fourteenth century. In the second book of this great historian's work, of which a MS. exists in the Imperial Library at Vienna, is the whole story. It runs as follows:—There was in Siraf a noble merchant prince of the name of Kaisar. When he died he left three sons, who very soon squandered the paternal fortune, and left their poor old mother to starve alone with her cat. Now, it is the habit in Eastern countries, when a merchant sails from a port, to ask poor people for a small present and their blessing, and to promise to bring back some present in return. The poor widow, when asked for a present, had nothing to give but her cat, and that cat she gave to the sailor, though with a sad heart. The sailor came to India and was invited to dine with the king, and while they sat at dinner he saw a man with a club standing by the king and killing the mice, with which the palace was swarming. The sailor fetched his cat, the cat killed the mice, and the king bought the cat for a fabulous sum. The honest sailor, returning, handed over the money to the poor widow, and she, good soul and kind mother as she was, gave all the money to her sons.'

'Here we have the original story of our Eastern Whittington several generations before his second birth in Britain.'—Professor Max Müller at the Mansion House, reported in the *Times*, September 21, 1874.

CHAPTER XIX.

HENRY VI.

A.D. 1422-1461.

' No sooner was I crept out of my cradle
But I was made a king, at nine months old : '

are the words which Shakespeare represents Henry as using in after years, referring to his succession to the crown.¹ The Council held immediately at Westminster, upon the death of Henry V., offered the Duke of Gloucester a commission to open Parliament and conduct public affairs. The duke objected to a clause which limited his power, and claimed the regency as his of right while the Duke of Bedford remained in France, he being next in order of succession, and having been previously so appointed by his brother. The lords objected that Henry had no power to bequeath his authority, but they nominated Gloucester President of the Council and 'Protector of the realm and Church of England,' a title which might, as they hoped, remind him of the duties which he had to perform.²

The regency of the English provinces in France, having been declined by the Duke of Burgundy, was, with the concurrence of the King of France, given, just before his death, to the Duke of Bedford.

The disgraced Dauphin immediately put forward his pretensions as the heir of the French monarchy, and many nobles of France, who, from mere disgust at his conduct, had of late adhered to Henry V., at length, after the death of both sovereigns, acknowledged the French prince as the lineal descendant of their own kings. As Rheims, by ancient custom the crowning-place of the sovereigns of France, was in possession of the Duke of Burgundy, the young prince, two days after his

¹ 'Second Part of *Henry VI.*' act. iv. sc. 9.

² Lingard, v. 67; Hallam, ii. 317. The ascendancy of Cardinal Beaufort was immediately shown in opposition to the Duke of Gloucester.

father's death, was crowned at Chartres, and assumed the title of Charles VII.; but he continued for some time to reside at Bourges in the greatest poverty.¹

Henry's death appeared in the first instance to weaken the English cause but little, as the Duke of Bedford much resembled his late brother in energy and address, and the Dukes of Burgundy and Bretagne met the English regent at Arras, where they entered into a compact to fulfil the treaty of Troyes. Indeed, to bind their friendship the closer, the Dukes of Bedford and Bretagne each married a sister of the Duke of Burgundy.

The Loire was the boundary between the provinces which acknowledged severally the King of France and the English regent. The civil war now rekindled in France, and continued for some years without any decisive consequences. Towns were taken and retaken, with alternate success and defeat. The war was so popular in England that it was easy to find soldiers, and besides the Duke of Bedford, the Earls of Warwick, Salisbury, and Talbot were distinguished commanders of the English troops.

Catherine of France, the mother of the little King of England, had meantime contracted a marriage with a Welsh gentleman named Owen ap Tudor; and Henry, deprived of his natural guardians, was constrained by the Council to give authority for his own education and *chastisement*, when required, to Dame Alice Botiller, and in like manner, after he attained his seventh year, to the Earl of Warwick.²

Five years passed, after the death of Henry V., before the English leaders resolved to cross the Loire, and besiege the city of Orleans. To save the city from famine, Charles established immense magazines in the neighbouring city of Blois and succeeded in sending in supplies of men and provisions; but when, in the spring, Orleans was closer invested, the most gloomy apprehensions appalled the friends of the French monarchy. Should this city fall, the central provinces of France would lie open to the enemy, and it is said that Charles in despair was contemplating a retreat into Dauphiné.³ The siege of Orleans had begun under the command of the Earl of Salisbury, and, when he was killed, was continued by the Earl, sometimes called the Duke, of Suffolk.

But it was not left to earls or dukes to re-establish or ruin

¹ Hallam, i. 72.

² Lingard, v. 106. Warwick was empowered to chastise the king for 'negligence or disobedience, in such manner as other princes of similar age were wont to be chastised.'

³ Hallam, i. 74.

the French monarchy. A marvellous revolution turned the tide of events, and a country girl gave the first impulse towards the overthrow of the English ascendancy.

Joan d'Arc was born, about the year 1412, in a village on the borders of Lorraine, a district which had been for many years disturbed by the warfare between France and Burgundy. The daughter of a labourer, she grew up amidst continual alarms, imbibing the exciting legends of the age, which, blending with the traditions of the Roman Catholic faith, formed the only instruction imparted to her.

According to a pretended prophecy of Merlin, current in her province, the kingdom of France would be saved by a maiden of Lorraine. At this period it was not so extraordinary as in later times for women to bear arms; and why might not France, like the kingdom of Israel, have a Judith? We cannot wonder that the pious maiden should abhor the unnatural alliance of the Burgundians with the English, and deeply bewail the fate of her deserted sovereign. She was led to believe that angel-voices called her forth to be the deliverer of her country, and with this enthusiastic persuasion she was induced to undertake a daring mission. Having obtained from the governor of a neighbouring town permission to proceed to the French Court, she set off on horseback, and, for greater safety, in male attire, on a ride of a hundred and fifty leagues through a country beset by marauding soldiers, until at length she reached Charles's residence, a few miles from Chinon. Undisturbed by signs of fear, and upheld by a noble purpose, Joan entered the spacious hall, filled with some hundreds of knights, in which was Charles, undistinguished by any sign of royalty. Pictures might, perhaps, have enabled her to recognise the king. She is said to have discovered him immediately, and to have advanced and bent the knee. The greater part of the king's followers at once believed in her preternatural powers; and Charles himself expressed his confidence in her mission. To obviate scruples, however, he caused her to be examined by a committee of divines, and waited three weeks before he gave his full sanction to her hazardous enterprise. Some of the bravest officers in France had collected a strong body of men at Blois, in order to supply Orleans with provisions. Joan wished to join in their attempt, but she was secretly brought across the river in a boat by Dunois, the governor of Orleans, and was received by the citizens with lighted torches and acclamations of joy.¹ Shortly afterwards the convoy of provisions entered

¹ Lingard, p. 82.

the city, and as small bodies of volunteers contrived to effect their entrance in spite of the besieging army, so great an additional force might have turned the fortune of the day. From this moment it was dangerous to dispute the maiden's supernatural mission. Her presence infused into the French soldiers a spirit of confidence which their leaders could not restrain. Whilst day after day sallies were made on the forts which the English had erected round the walls, Joan was to be seen in the foremost rank, displaying her banner and encouraging her countrymen, and when wounded by an arrow she withdrew only for a few minutes, returning again to assist the victorious attack. Meantime, among the English ranks the bravest soldiers recoiled from encountering a female champion whom they believed to be assisted by unseen powers, and it was in vain that Suffolk and his officers endeavoured to dissipate their terrors. Under these circumstances the Earl of Suffolk raised the siege of the beleaguered city; and on May 8 Orleans was free.

Supported by the maiden's intrepidity, and the trust reposed in her special aid, Charles advanced upon Paris, gaining several fortresses, and the Earls of Suffolk and Talbot, with numbers of their followers, were taken prisoners. The Maid of Orleans, as Joan was now called, was exposed to all the dangers of war. At the siege of Jargeau she led the assault, and was precipitated into the ditch, but still did not lose her presence of mind. Her first great object had been to save Orleans; her next was to have the king crowned again, at Rheims, as his ancestors had been. It was difficult and dangerous so far to penetrate the hostile country, but at her desire Charles consented to attempt the enterprise. Troyes, the city where a few years before the treaty had been concluded for a 'perpetual peace' on the terms of the subjection of France, now opened her gates to her own sovereign, and the citizens of Rheims, having expelled the Burgundian garrison, joyfully welcomed their own king. Charles was crowned in the usual manner, but without the presence of the peers of France; instead of his chief feudal supporters, the heroic maiden stood by his side displaying her banner. At the close of the ceremony, Joan threw herself at the king's feet, declaring her allotted task to be accomplished, and imploring him to allow her to return into retirement. But Charles was reluctant to lose her powerful aid, and at his urgent request she consented still to remain with the army. When asked for advice, whether or not to engage in battle with the English, she hesitated, for on such a matter she had no judg-

ment to offer. Being dangerously wounded in an attack in the neighbourhood of Paris, Joan considered that she had received a warning from Heaven to desist from further warfare, and consecrated her armour in the church of St. Denis. But she could not resist the repeated call of her sovereign. At length, when assisting to raise the siege of Compiègne, she was taken prisoner, and some months afterwards Prince John of Luxemburg, into whose hands she fell, sold her to the Duke of Bedford. Once a prisoner, the unfortunate maiden was treated by all parties with neglect and cruelty. If ever sovereign was indebted to a subject, Charles VII. was to Joan of Arc, who had so pre-eminently retrieved his fortunes from the lowest depression.

Yet, so soon as the charm of her magical success was broken, no effort was made to save the life which she had with so much bravery devoted to her country. The superstition which had unnerved the English when she first raised her banner, now increased their rancour. The Bishop of Beauvais, with the approval of the Duke of Bedford, claimed his right to try her on the charge of sorcery and imposture. She underwent a long trial at Rouen, where her condemnation was approved by the powerful Bishop of Winchester, and by the University of Paris. After a long delay, many efforts being made to cause her to confess her delusions, Joan was led to the stake and was burnt to death in the market-place of Rouen, about twelve months after her capture. Succeeding ages have done justice to the memory of one who, deceived as she doubtless was by her enthusiastic dreams, was yet so brave, so pious, and so entirely self-sacrificing. It is said that the only recompense for which she asked was, that the place of her birth might be free from taxation. This privilege, so honourable to the petitioner, was accorded, and remained in force until the Revolution of 1790. During more than three centuries the registers of taxation were marked at the name of Domrémy, 'Nothing, for the sake of Joan d'Arc.'¹ The extraordinary power wielded by this heroic maiden may be more easily credited by those who remember the instance in more recent history of the high-born 'Maid of Saragossa,' whose patriotic daring has been celebrated by Lord Byron.²

To counterbalance the effect of the coronation at Rheims,

¹ See 'Quarterly Review,' March, 1842; Turner's 'History of England,' ii. 518; Hallam, i. 75, and note.

² First canto of 'Childe Harold,' stanza lvi. and note. This celebrated siege took place in the year 1808.

the Duke of Bedford brought over the little King of England from the nursery; and, Rheims being in Charles's hands, Henry VI. was crowned at Paris by Cardinal Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, uncle of the late King of England.

Triumphal arches were erected in the streets of Paris, and the English nobility were present in large numbers; no nobles of France at all, no prince of royal lineage, not even the Duke of Burgundy, not one of the French peers, chose to honour the court of the unfortunate royal child who was set in the place of their monarchs. Henry remained for some time in Normandy after the ceremony. He had been previously crowned at Westminster.

The ascendancy of the English government was engrossed by the Cardinal Bishop of Winchester, whose rivalry with his nephew, the Duke of Gloucester, much disturbed the English councils. Although the government during the last two reigns had stoutly resisted heresy, yet the general jealousy of the usurping pretensions of Rome rendered Bishop Beaufort's appointment as legate most unpopular. Henry V. had even forbidden him to accept that office whilst he resided in England.

In the year 1429, however, the cardinal ventured to make a public entry into London, where he was met in solemn procession by the clergy, citizens, and corporation; but the Council extorted a promise from him to abstain from any act derogatory to the rights either of the Crown or of the people. The public revenues in England fell short of the expenditure. The war with France languished, and was a great drain upon England; but the nobility, some of whom had been greatly enriched by the plunder of France and the ransoms of the prisoners, still clung to the continuance of war. These allied themselves with the Duke of Gloucester, head of the war party, whilst Cardinal Beaufort inclined to reserve the sword for the extirpation of heretics at home, and even also abroad.¹

It was by the aid of the Duke of Burgundy, 'the most magnificent prince of his age,' that the English rule had been so long sustained in northern France. But the duke, 'Philip the Good,' was weary of the English; he felt that he had sufficiently revenged the murder of his father, while both his interests as well as his natural attachments inclined

¹ Lingard, v. 110. The Pope appointed Cardinal Beaufort Captain-general in 'the crusade' against the Hussites in Germany; the troops were raised, but the cardinal was induced by a bribe of a thousand marks to change their destination to that of the French war. When Charles VII. found that those named Crusaders were arrayed against himself, he complained bitterly of the deceit.

him towards his native sovereign.¹ A congress of reconciliation was held at Arras, in north-eastern France, which proved the grandest political assembly ever yet convened in Europe. Cardinal Beaufort appeared on behalf of Henry, the Duke of Bourbon for Charles, and envoys were present from nearly every state, including the free cities of Flanders and the Hanse Towns. As usual on such occasions, pleasure at first prevailed over business; but the pretensions of the Courts of France and England were too much opposed for any pacification to be effected between them. The English embassy withdrew, and in its absence peace was proclaimed between France and Burgundy.

As soon as the treaty was signed, the French envoys, on their knees, implored pardon of the duke for his father's murder, and the duke solemnly declared his forgiveness. Before the congress was over, the Duke of Bedford died at Rouen, and was interred in the cathedral.

The Duke of Gloucester now publicly accused Cardinal Beaufort of avarice and of unlawful acquirement of wealth. Licences were granted at this period to those who pretended to change the nature of metals and to make that substance called the philosopher's stone, by which it was believed that gold might be produced. The Duke of Gloucester was celebrated for his patronage of learned men. One of his chaplains, Roger Bolingbroke by name, was accused by the Church party of necromancy, and the Duchess of laying plans to shorten the king's life. Nothing was so difficult to refute in the fifteenth century as a charge of necromancy. Bolingbroke was exposed to public derision in St. Paul's churchyard, seated on a high stool, dressed in a fantastic garb, and was afterwards actually executed.

Margery Jourdain, a reputed witch, was condemned to be burnt, and the duchess, after being compelled to walk through the streets of London on three several days, with bare head, carrying a lighted taper, was imprisoned for life. The warrant by which she was transferred from Chester to Kenilworth Castle is still extant. She was afterwards taken to the Isle of Man, in which Shakespeare lays the scene of her confinement. The duchess's maiden name was Eleanor Cobham; and, as she was distantly related to Sir John Oldcastle, it has been conjectured that Lollardism was the real fault both of her and of Bolingbroke, whose fate was lamented by many. Great complaint was now made of the want of grammar

¹ Lingard, v. 92. 93.

schools, for parents had been prohibited placing their children under private teachers, through fear of their imbibing the tenets of Wyclif.

In the year 1439 both England and France suffered from famine and pestilence. London merchants imported rye from the Baltic; and the name of Sir Stephen Brown has been recorded as having, during his mayoralty, established a public granary, and sent ships to Dantzic for corn, thus first showing the Londoners 'the way to the barndoor, prompted,' says Fuller, 'by charity, not covetousness, to this adventure.'

The next negotiation on which the chief councillors took different views was the young king's marriage. It was evident that Henry's weak mind would be overruled by a wife of strong capacity, and the heads of the peace party desired to unite him to Margaret, whose father was by title Duke of Anjou and Maine, provinces in possession of England, nominally also King of Jerusalem and Sicily.

The task of conducting the treaty of marriage was entrusted to the Earl of Suffolk, who after Bedford's death had assumed the direction of the English affairs in France. By it, instead of receiving a dowry, it was agreed that Henry should even restore to King René the provinces of Anjou and Maine. Suffolk, as proxy for his sovereign, was contracted to Margaret on October 28, 1444, with the approval of the French Court; and the succeeding spring she arrived in England, was married to Henry, and crowned with the usual ceremony at Westminster. This was probably the last occasion before the impending civil war when the English nobility displayed their numerous retainers at a festive season. The Duke of Gloucester brought five hundred followers splendidly arrayed in uniform, and some liveries were of beaten gold.

Several manors were settled on the queen as her dowry, and the Earl of Suffolk was raised to a dukedom.

But, amidst this magnificent display, many murmured that Henry should please—

'To change two dukedoms for a duke's fair daughter.'¹

The queen's conduct was not conciliating; she was advised no longer to allow Henry to be kept in the background as if of

¹ Shakespeare, 'Second Part of *Henry VI.*' act. i. sc. 1. In the third part the Duke of York taunts the queen thus:—

'Thy father bears the name of King of Naples,
Of both the Sicils, and Jerusalem,
Yet not so wealthy as an English yeoman.'—Act i. scene 4.

tender age; and, through her influence and that of Cardinal Beaufort, a conspiracy was formed against the Duke of Gloucester.

At the beginning of February, 1447, the king was induced to summon Parliament to meet, not in Westminster, as usual, but at Bury St. Edmund's. The knights of the shires received orders to come in arms, the men of Suffolk were in array, and the king's residence was guarded with great precaution. The Duke of Gloucester came from his castle of Devizes, with but thirty-two attendants, instead of the large retinue with which men of rank protected themselves in times of danger. His enemies declared that it was from him that they feared danger for the king. He was arrested on a charge of high treason, and he and his retainers were sent to different prisons. Loud murmurs arose among the people when it was known that their favourite duke was in prison; and, to quiet them, a report was spread that Gloucester had plotted against the king's life, in order to obtain the freedom of his duchess. Seventeen days after his arrest, Gloucester died in prison. The body was publicly exposed to view, to show that there was no wound; and his death was attributed to apoplexy or despair, but the people believed that he had been murdered, probably by suffocation.

Five of the duke's household were sent to London, and sentenced to suffer the cruel death inflicted on traitors. They were suspended on the gibbet in presence of the Duke of Suffolk, but at the last moment were rescued by the arrival of the king's pardon. Although the people applauded the mercy thus barbarously dispensed, their 'grudge and murmur ceased not against the Duke of Suffolk for the death of the good Duke of Gloucester, of whose murder he was specially suspected.'¹ The tomb of the 'good Duke Humphrey,' as he was affectionately called by the common people, was long visited with reverence.

After this period the dislike of the queen, and of her coadjutor the Duke of Suffolk, increased. The Duke of Somerset also, who was engaged in the losing cause in France, and who, in November, 1449, surrendered Rouen to Charles, fell into much disfavour.

The Duke of Gloucester's uncle and chief opponent, Cardinal Beaufort, shortly afterwards died, whose mental sufferings

¹ The chronicler Fabian, quoted by Turner. Lingard, anxious to free Cardinal Beaufort from suspicion, inclines to the supposition that Gloucester died from natural causes (v. 122, note).

are said to have been handed down by his chaplain, Dr. Baker, and Hall's account has been perpetuated by Shakespeare.

Lingard calls it a fiction, but describes a singular ceremony by which the cardinal forestalled his funeral obsequies, intending apparently an act of expiation for his sins.¹ Three weeks after Gloucester's death, he was, by his own orders, carried into the great hall of his palace, where the clergy and the monks of Winchester were assembled. A dirge was sung, the funeral service was performed, and his will read aloud. A similar ceremony was performed the next morning, after which the cardinal took leave of all present and was carried back to his chamber. He was eighty years of age, and suffering from mortal disease. His great wealth, the source of large aids to the king in conducting the war, was bequeathed for charitable purposes or the endowment of colleges.²

The English people had been greatly displeased by the concession of Maine and Anjou to Queen Margaret's father; and when Normandy was invaded by the French and a victory over the English in the open field was spreading joy through France, every tongue bewailed the fallen glory of England, every place resounded with cries for vengeance on the Duke of Suffolk, who was called the queen's minion.³ When the Bishop of Chichester, the lord chancellor, went to Portsmouth to pay the soldiers and sailors for their services in France, the populace were so transported with rage against one believed to have been concerned in the loss of Maine, that a tumult arose, in which the bishop was slain. The charges against the Duke of Suffolk became so violent that in January, 1450, he, at his own request, addressed the *king* in Parliament in a speech which was entered on the rolls, setting forth the services rendered to the State by his father, brothers, and himself, that he had been thirty-four years in arms, that all his inheritance lay in England, and asking whether it could be believed that from any motive he could become a traitor to his country. His eloquence proved unavailing; four days after this address, the House of Commons requested that, as the duke was, by his own confession, under the suspicion of treason, he should be sent to the Tower.

The Lords declining to agree to this without a specific charge, the Commons immediately framed an absurd story of Suffolk's readiness to aid the King of France in invading England, on

¹ Lingard, v. 124, note.

² The hospital of St. Cross, near Winchester, remains a memorial of the cardinal's munificence.

³ Lingard, v. 129.

which pretence he was committed to prison. The Court upon this endeavoured to save his life by imposing a moderate sentence.

He was called before the King and Lords, and, by the voice of the lord chancellor, commanded to quit the kingdom before May 1, and to remain five years in exile. This judgment by no means satisfied his enemies, who endeavoured to intercept him on his way from prison. Having taken leave of his friends in Suffolk, and written a letter of wise admonition to his son, the duke set sail from Ipswich on April 30. But he was not yet beyond the reach of his foes. The 'Nicholas of the Tower,' one of the largest ships in the navy, bore down on the duke's vessel, and seized him. The duke underwent a mock trial before the sailors, and was condemned to suffer death. A small boat brought a block and an executioner; the duke was lowered into it and beheaded. His remains were carried ashore and protected by the sheriff of Kent, until, by the king's command, they were consigned to the care of his widow. That such a deed could be enacted with impunity by persons of high rank and influence, shows how weak the royal authority had become; but that the king, by sentencing the duke to exile, should defeat the proceedings of Parliament to screen a favourite minister, was justly considered a stretch of the prerogative. Henry's weakness of understanding became more evident in his manhood and 'rendered his reign a perpetual minority,' while his marriage with a princess so violent and vindictive as Margaret inflamed the dangerous enmities of rival statesmen.¹

The debt, which had been allowed to accumulate, and the increased expenses of the royal household, became so pressing that Parliament imposed a large income-tax on all persons holding lands or offices.²

Threats of speedy and severe vengeance against all who were supposed to have participated in the death of the queen's favourite minister, the Duke of Suffolk, roused the men of Kent to insurrection. It was spread abroad that the county was to be 'made a wild forest,' as punishment for a crime with which the inhabitants declared that they had no concern.

On Whit Sunday, May 24, large numbers of people assembled at Ashford, and chose for their leader John Cade—said by some to have been a gentleman of small property, who had served with honour in Ireland under Richard Duke of York, and inclined to favour his cause; described by others as the son of a bricklayer. This parentage he did not deny, at the same time

¹ See Hallam, ii. 231-313.

² Turner, iii. 70.

asserting that the bricklayer was the son of the Earl of March. Cade now assumed the name of Mortimer, the cousin of the Duke of York, and was called the Captain of Kent.

On May 31 he encamped upon Blackheath, where he remained for a month, levying contributions on the adjoining country, but restraining pillage, and promising future payment for supplies.¹ He expressed great respect for the person of the king, but published the 'Complaint of the Commons of Kent,' detailing numerous abuses of power, some of which were real grievances. Complaint was made that the Duke of York and others were excluded from the Council; that partiality was shown towards the royal favourites; that innocent Jews were accused of treason in order to obtain possession of their estates; that freedom in electing knights to serve in Parliament was hindered; and that 'simple men, that use not hunting,' were oppressed by indictments which were especially mentioned as sealed with *green wax*—whence the allusion in Shakespeare's play.²

The king, after hastily dissolving Parliament at Leicester, and exchanging messages without success, advanced against the rebel encampment with 20,000 men. Cade, although possessing the larger army, retired to Sevenoaks, whither he was pursued by Sir Humfrey Stafford. The rebel chieftain, however, obtained the victory, Sir Humfrey and his brother were slain, and the king, losing courage, retired to Kenilworth Castle, while the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Duke of Buckingham were deputed to confer with Cade at Blackheath. Cade demanded concessions which the envoys had not power to grant, and on July 3 entered London unopposed.

'That little republic in the city,' which had sufficient power frequently to check the arbitrary counsels of the royal government, 'more than half sympathised with the objects of the

¹ The exaggerating traditions of the time computed Cade's followers at 100,000 men. Lingard states them to have been 20,000, and, as the king had about that number under his command, the forces were not unequal; but Henry could not, as Hall's Chronicle reports, quite depend on the fidelity of his own troops. Discontent prevailed in several counties, but first ripened into rebellion in Kent. Mr. Gairdner says: 'Although well known to be a man of the lowest birth and connexions, he' (Cade) 'declares himself a Mortimer.' 'At first he is talked of as "Jack Cade, the clothier," who "means to dress the Commonwealth, turn it, and set a new nap upon it!" but he afterward asserted his descent from the Earl of March, and obtained influence with the multitude by "this grand audacity."'

² Second part of *Henry VI.*, act iv. sc. 2. 'Is not this a lamentable thing, that of the skin of an innocent lamb should be made parchment?' . . . 'Some say the bee stings, but I say it is the bees' wax'—words ascribed to Cade by Shakespeare. See note in Turner's *History of England*, iii. 81, and the remarks, in the 'Fortnightly Review' of October, 1870, of Mr. James Gairdner.

rising.’¹ Cade, under the name of Mortimer, became lord of the city, with general approval, and his first acts inspired hope that he would use his power with moderation. ‘He issued proclamations in the king’s name that no one should take anything without payment, on pain of death. He thus won the hearts of the citizens.’ The royal chamberlain, Lord Say, one of the most obnoxious of the ministers, and Crowmer, his son-in-law, who is named among those guilty of extortion, were arraigned before the lord mayor and the king’s justices; but, being informed that Lord Say claimed to be tried by his peers, Cade allowed his followers to seize him and bring him to speedy execution in Cheapside. Crowmer also was beheaded, and the heads of these murdered men were carried through the streets of London.²

Plunder followed these acts of brutality, and the more wealthy citizens soon discovered that they had admitted ‘a robber under the name of a reformer.’ For three days Cade ruled the city at his pleasure, retiring each evening to pass the night in Southwark. But on the third day the Lord Mayor and citizens concerted with Lord Scales and the governor of the Tower, that Cade should not re-enter London, and on the night of July 5 a barrier was erected at London Bridge. Cade called his men to arms, and a fierce combat continued through the night, the drawbridge being set on fire, and several men slain, until at last the insurgents were driven back into Southwark. A conference then took place between Cade and Waynfleet, Bishop of Winchester, with others of the king’s council. The demands of the insurgents were received, and the chancellor issued pardons, after which the greater number of the rebels returned home. But Cade persuaded a few of his followers to remain with him, suggesting that the pardons would not avail unless confirmed by Parliament. More disturbances justified further measures of vengeance. A reward of 1,000 marks was offered for Cade’s capture; he fled into Sussex, and at last yielded himself a prisoner to Iden, the sheriff of Kent, after being so severely wounded that he died before reaching London. The names of many hundred persons, his followers, which are inscribed on the patent-roll of 28th Henry VI., include some of respectable families still existing. Among them also was ‘one notary and one scrivener, not only able to write and read, but who made a business of writing.’ Shakespeare was a little

¹ Mr. Gairdner’s words are here quoted.

² Lingard says that Henry had sent Lord Say to the Tower, adding that Cade ‘got possession of Lord Say’ by some means which are not mentioned.

premature in allusions to the printing press, which had been but lately invented, and paper was seldom used.

The Duke of York was distinctly named in the petitions as the nobleman whom the king ought to call to his counsels, and 'Cade's rebellion may therefore be considered the first move in the struggle between the Houses of York and Lancaster.'¹ Thereupon the Duke of York abruptly left Ireland and alarmed the king by approaching London with 4,000 followers. The arrival of the Duke of Somerset from France reassured him, however, the duke being considered the most faithful of his kindred; but the people looked with ill-will upon Somerset after the recent loss of Normandy, and the continual disputes of the rival dukes disturbed the proceedings of Parliament.

In January, 1451, seven months after the close of Cade's rebellion, the king undertook a journey into Kent to execute further punishment on the rebels. According to Stow, many persons were arraigned for treason, and twenty-six were executed. On his return, on February 23, great numbers of people met him at Blackheath and asked pardon on their knees, which was granted. Henry was afterwards joyfully received by the citizens of London, and nine heads of Kentish men recently executed were set on London Bridge, where still remained the head of Captain Cade. Yet all efforts of the king's councillors, whether conciliatory or severe, availed little to tranquillise the Commons. On March 1, 1452, the rival Dukes of York and Somerset met unarmed in the royal tent. Each accused the other of treasonable designs, Somerset urging the king to bring the Duke of York to trial. York was arrested; but Henry was unwilling to proceed against a relation, and offered him liberty on condition of an oath of fealty. To this York readily agreed, and after he had solemnly sworn in St. Paul's Church, before a numerous assembly, he was allowed to retire to his castle of Wigmore.

The birth of an heir to the crown in the autumn of 1453, who received the name of Edward, gave satisfaction to the loyal; but Henry's failing health gave reason for anxiety, and his mental weakness could not be disguised.

The Duke of York was now recalled to the cabinet, his party naming him Protector of the realm, and Somerset was sent to the Tower. At the close of 1454, Henry's health revived, and he endeavoured in vain to bring about a reconcilia-

¹ Mr. Gairdner, to whose contribution repeated references have been made, states the great difficulty of arriving at accurate knowledge of each particular event during this reign. Mr. Gairdner's chief authority is 'Illustrations of Jack Cade's Rebellion,' by Mr. Brogden Orridge and Mr. Durrant Cooper.

tion. The Duke of York placed himself at the head of 3,000 men, supported by the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Salisbury, and the son of the earl, the celebrated Earl of Warwick. The king advanced to St. Alban's, where he was confronted by the Yorkists, who sent a loyal message, but demanded that Somerset and his associates should be surrendered, or they would pursue them to the death.

Henry, with proper firmness, refused to abandon his adherents, and an engagement ensued, in which the Yorkists obtained a complete victory. The king, having been wounded by an arrow, took refuge in the house of a tanner, from which the Duke of York led him first to the shrine of St. Alban's, and then to his apartments in the abbey, protesting that Somerset alone had been guilty of treasonable practices. The usage of the age, which allowed of trial by combat on an accusation of treason, enabled York to palliate his late violence, and Henry, having no power of resistance, announced before Parliament that he believed York, Salisbury, and Warwick to be good and loyal subjects, and that he granted them a full pardon for past offences. The peers then renewed their oath of fealty.¹

Repeatedly, when Henry became incapable of taking any part in the government, the Duke of York took the chief direction of affairs, and when the king's health was restored, York descended from his high station. If the sovereignty of the realm were to be regarded as a private inheritance, York's claim—derived, through his mother, from Lionel, Duke of Clarence, third son of Edward III.—gave him the priority over Henry, whose ancestor was John of Gaunt, a younger brother of Lionel. The consent of the nation, three descents of the crown, Acts of Parliament, and repeated oaths of allegiance, with undisturbed possession during sixty years, had given the most just guarantee to the ruling family of Lancaster; but, so long as Henry was childless, the Duke of York was heir presumptive, and the favour with which a large party regarded his pretensions was increased by the queen's unpopularity.²

In January, 1458, a great effort was made to establish peace between the hostile factions. The leaders brought their followers to London, where the Yorkists were admitted; the Royalists were outside the walls, and the mayor, at the head of 5,000 armed citizens, undertook to preserve the peace. The king, who

¹ In the second part of Shakespeare's *Henry VI.* one Horner offers to clear himself from the accusation of adherence to the Duke of York, by combat; this is said to have been founded on a real occurrence. See Turner's *History*, iii. 90.

² Hallam, ii. 325.

was at Berkhamstead, with several of the judges, declared his award that the Duke of York and the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick should found a chantry, and otherwise make atonement for the death of three lords who had been slain at St. Alban's. Thus, as if these and other similar stipulations could form a true security for peace, Henry, on March 25, walked with his court in procession to St. Paul's, whither the queen was conducted by her great adversary, the Duke of York.

So far was the country yet from any lasting tranquillity, that the year 1459 was chiefly occupied by preparations for war. The court distributed collars with the device of the white swan, the badge of the infant prince, and invited the king's friends to meet him at Leicester; whilst the leaders on the other side enrolled their partisans and the veterans who had served under Warwick's banner. Party feeling divided private life, penetrating even the convents and the cottages of the poor. The strength of the Yorkists lay chiefly in London and the adjacent counties, and generally among the middle classes and lower people.

In the autumn Henry was at Worcester with an army of 60,000 men—evidence of ascendancy which encouraged the queen to convoke a Parliament at Coventry, by which the Duke and Duchess of York, their children, the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, and other Yorkist leaders, were attainted. Henry is said to have been reluctant to allow of this act of severity, which scarcely left to York a chance of safety as a subject.

The chief supporter of the duke's claims was the Earl of Warwick, who had been allowed to retain the command of the fleet and the lucrative government of Calais, and who, by the lavish hospitality with which he dispensed his wealth, had become the favourite of the people. The chronicler describes, indeed, the profusion of his house when he was in London, mentioning that six oxen were eaten at a breakfast, and that every tavern was full of the meat, for that anyone who could claim aught in that house might carry away all that he could bear upon a long dagger.¹ This famous earl, who has been described by a popular writer as the 'last of the barons,' was Richard Neville, a son of the Earl of Salisbury, who, by marriage with the daughter of the late Earl of Warwick, had obtained that title and inheritance. The attempt of the queen's party to deprive this nobleman of power drove him straight into open revolt. In June, 1460, he landed in Kent with fifteen hundred men, was joined

¹ Stowe's Chronicles.

by Lord Cobham and the Archbishop of Canterbury, and entered London without opposition.

The king was encamped at Northampton, and his friends were confident of victory; but they were betrayed and speedily vanquished, with the loss of numerous knights and gentlemen—the policy of Warwick being to spare the people, but to refuse quarter to the high-born.

The hapless Henry's power was at an end. He was brought to London in the apparent enjoyment of his formal dignity, the Earl of Warwick riding bareheaded, and carrying the sword before him, but he was a mere instrument by which Parliament was summoned to repeal the violent acts of the late Parliament of Coventry.

Queen Margaret had escaped with her son from the field, and after many adventures took refuge in Scotland. After a few months the Duke of York entered London, and appeared in the House of Lords, where he stood before the assembly for a short time with his hand on the throne, apparently only waiting for an invitation to take the royal seat. The primate ventured to ask him if he would visit the king, to which York answered that he knew 'no one in the realm' who ought not rather to visit him—this being the first occasion upon which he laid public claim to royal honour.

But, in spite of Henry's occasional incapacity and Margaret's vindictiveness, the majority of good men were averse to dethroning the present meek and inoffensive sovereign in favour of the duke who had so repeatedly sworn to maintain his sovereignty.

On October 16 the duke sent a statement of his claim and its grounds to be delivered to the Bishop of Exeter, the chancellor, and requested a speedy answer. The Lords allowed the statement to be read, but declined to reply without the king's commands, and, when further pressed, waited on Henry for his instructions. His reply was simple fact: 'My father was king; his father was also king; I have worn the crown from my cradle; you have all sworn fealty to me as your sovereign, and your fathers have done the like to my fathers. How then can my right be disputed?' The Lords requested the opinion of the judges, but they declared that 'the present question was above the law, and belonged not to them.'¹ To 'save their oaths and clear their consciences,' a compromise was proposed, that the crown should remain on Henry's head during his life, and that the duke and his heirs should inherit the sovereignty. Both parties agreed to this, York and his two sons promising to leave Henry

¹ Lingard, v. 162.

unmolested, and Henry declaring any attempt against the duke's person to be high treason. To testify to the restoration of concord, Henry crowned, rode in state to St. Paul's, attended by the duke as heir apparent.

But although the unfortunate monarch had thus surrendered his son's claims, Margaret of Anjou refused to be a party to the compact. Despising her husband's timid meekness, she again appeared on the field, roused to desperation by the threatened loss of her son's rights; and a powerful party of nobility assembled at York in arms on her behalf. A battle took place near Wakefield, where the Duke of York and his young son, the Earl of Rutland, were slain.

In futile revenge, the queen placed upon the walls of York the duke's head, encircled with paper for a mock crown. The duke had, this time, taken arms in self-defence, and, according to the compact, his adversaries were guilty of high treason. From that day the war took a new character, and was conducted on both sides with thirst for revenge. Margaret and her son advanced victorious to Barnet, and rejoined the king. A royalist triumph appeared at hand, but the queen's troops refused to continue their march, and the citizens of London opened their gates to Edward, late Earl of March, son of the Duke of York who had just fallen.

On February 25, Edward entered London with all the pomp of a conqueror. He was in his nineteenth year, and admired for his personal beauty. It was proclaimed that Henry, having joined the queen's forces, had violated his compact, and that the crown rightfully devolved upon the heir of Richard Duke of York.

On March 4 the young prince was proclaimed king in the usual style, as Edward IV. This ended, not indeed the life, but the reign of the unfortunate Henry. The recent compromise had effected the destruction of both the personages whose interests it was designed to promote.

The weakness of Henry's understanding rendered his reign 'a perpetual minority,' and his marriage with a princess of a peculiarly vindictive spirit only accelerated his downfall. The murder of the people's favourite, the Duke of Gloucester, imputed to the queen's influence, removed the firmest support of the House of Lancaster, and provoked an attack upon her partisan, the Duke of Suffolk.

The Duke of York is said to have shown moderation and humanity, whilst the barbarities of the northern army, which Margaret led towards London after the battle of Wakefield,

deprived the Lancastrian cause of many former friends, and brought men to look with favour on the chances of a new dynasty.¹ In the early part of this reign the members of the House of Commons first obtained a law securing their personal safety during their attendance in Parliament. Also, complaint having been made of 'the outrageous and excessive number of persons' who had taken part in county elections, the right of voting for 'Knights of Shires' was declared restricted to freeholders possessing land of the annual value of forty shillings—a class which at that time formed a respectable part of society.²

¹ Hallam, ii. 324–327.

² Lingard, v. 169. Hallam, ii. 243.

CHAPTER XX.

EDWARD IV.

A.D. 1461-1483.

ON March 4, Edward was proclaimed king at Westminster, but the strength of the rival parties remained too nearly balanced for a continuance of tranquillity, until another and more decisive battle had been fought.

King Henry, the queen, and the young prince, were at York; the Duke of Somerset, son of the duke who fell in the first battle of St. Alban's, headed an army of 60,000 men; and the Earl of Warwick, followed immediately by Edward, advanced from the North to contend for the sovereignty.

The suspense was not long.

On March 29 a great battle took place at Towton, a village in the West Riding of Yorkshire, which was 'the most destructive and most decisive of all the battles that Englishmen had ever fought.' Tenants there contended against their landlords; sons and brothers stood on different sides. Shakespeare, indeed, to illustrate the scene, exhibits a father who had unknowingly slain his son in the fight, and a son who had slain his father.¹ Twenty-eight thousand men are said to have fallen on the Lancastrian side, among whom were Percy Earl of Northumberland, and the Earls of Devon and Wiltshire. The Dukes of Somerset and Exeter escaped from the field, and conducted Henry and his family to the border.

Edward proved a sanguinary conqueror. The slaughter and pursuit were continued throughout the night, and Edward's disappointment was great at Henry's escape with the

¹ Turner's History, p. 231, and third part of Shakespeare's *Henry VI.* The number of the slain is said to have much exceeded the English losses during the whole French war of that age.

queen. After employing some weeks in the pacification of the North, Edward was crowned at Westminster in June, and his younger brothers, George and Richard, received the titles of Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester.

The badge of the House of Lancaster was a red rose, that of the Yorkists a white one; and as these badges were the distinguishing mark of those who took part in this contest, the civil strife was termed 'The War of the Two Roses.' The ascendancy of the White Rose appeared now to be complete.¹

The Parliament which met in November showed their loyalty to their young sovereign by styling the last three reigns a tyrannical usurpation, and by passing a bill of attainder which included almost every man who had distinguished himself on behalf of Henry. A long list of surviving nobles, besides the old royal family, and numerous knights, priests, and esquires, were adjudged liable to all the penalties of treason. The chief motive for such unexampled severity was the determination to destroy the power of further resistance; but funds were also wanted to satisfy the demands of the Yorkists.

Before dissolving Parliament, Edward addressed the Speaker of the Commons, 'James Strangways' by name, thanking the House for their 'tender and true hearts' shown by the execution of vengeance for the murder of his father and brother, and of Lord Salisbury, his cousin.

Little chance remained of retrieving the fortunes of the House of Lancaster; but not yet did Margaret despair. She undertook an expedition to France, and, on the security of the town of Calais, obtained a loan from Louis XI. The English fleet pursued her, the winds caused the wreck of part of her treasure, but still with manly resolution she persevered.

According to popular tradition, when at one time she was riding, accompanied by her son and the seneschal, through a wild, mountainous district, she encountered a party of banditti, who robbed her of jewels. While the ruffians quarrelled about their spoil, Margaret contrived to escape with her son to another part of the forest, yet only to fall in with another robber. With the intrepidity of despair, the queen revealed her rank, and the robber, touched by her appeal, conducted her and the prince to their friends. During the severities of the Yorkist ascendancy, Henry was sheltered for more than a year

¹ According to a writer in the 'Quarterly Review' (October, 1868), 'a thicket of wild roses, white and red,' grows on the field of Towton, which now bears the name of the 'bloody meadow.' Relics of the great fight are occasionally turned up, and the wife of a miller used a battle-axe for breaking sugar, till the relic was purchased for the Duke of Northumberland's museum.

by the inhabitants of Lancashire and Westmoreland, his truly attached adherents. Betrayed at length, and delivered over to the Earl of Warwick in London, his feet were tied to the stirrups of his horse, he was led three times round the pillory, and then incarcerated in the Tower, where the hapless king remained for some years.

Although Edward's power appeared fully established after the battle of Towton, he greatly endangered his cause by contracting a private marriage with Lady Grey, the widow of a knight who fell in battle on the Lancastrian side. There was lately still in a hedgerow, near Grafton, in Northamptonshire, a tree called by the country people 'the queen's oak.' On that spot, according to tradition, Lady Grey, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Woodville, daughter of Lord Rivers, besought Edward to reverse the attainder of her late husband, Sir John Grey. The king was so much struck by her beauty as to desire her hand, and in May, 1464, they were privately married at Grafton. 'It was well for Elizabeth that on that May morning, which set the crown to her ambition, she did not foresee the miseries which awaited her as the future queen—the murder of her father, of her two brothers, of three of her sons, and her own forlorn state when she sat alone on the rushes all desolate in the sanctuary of Westminster; nor her penury when, "having no worldly goods to bequeath," she left her blessing to her children. During her prosperity, this queen completed the college at Cambridge which Margaret of Anjou had begun, and the endowments of Queens' College still preserve the name of Elizabeth Woodville.'

¹

Edward introduced his queen to a general council of the nobility which met at Reading Abbey, and she was crowned the next year with much rejoicing; still the ascendancy of her family was disliked by the nobility, and it soon appeared that the king had lost the support of the Earl of Warwick, the mainstay of his throne.

Warwick's family consisted of three daughters; he had no son. It seems probable that he had cherished the desire to place one of these daughters on the throne, and to be the ancestor of a royal line. Should Edward die childless, the royal inheritance would pass to the Duke of Clarence, then lieutenant of Ireland, who, notwithstanding Edward's disapproval, had married a daughter of Warwick.

¹ See an article on the 'History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire,' 'Quarterly Review,' No. 201. The name of this queen's family was spelt indiscriminately Wydeville or Woodville.

Although Yorkshire had been a centre of the House of York, an insurrection now broke out in that county, under a peasant leader called Robin of Redesdale, the pretext of which was to resist ecclesiastical exactions, and reform abuses. The Earl of Northumberland, Warwick's brother, protected the city of York, defeated 15,000 insurgents with considerable slaughter, and caused their leader to be executed. But after this prompt vengeance, the powerful noblemen who had the power of turning the tide of victory themselves raised a further insurrection with the avowed object of removing the king's brothers-in-law, the Woodvilles, from power. At the name of Warwick his tenants advanced from every quarter, and very soon the insurgents numbered 60,000. Edward summoned his retainers, but advised the Woodvilles to secrete themselves. The Royalists were defeated at Edgecote, near Banbury, and Earl Rivers and Sir John Woodville, the father and brother of the queen, were captured in the Forest of Dean, and executed, by the order, it is said, of Clarence and Warwick. Northumberland, Warwick, and the Archbishop of Canterbury proceeded in search of King Edward, whom they found at Olney, grieving over the defeat of his troops and the murder of his relatives. Their respectful mode of address at first deceived Edward, but he soon discovered that he had become their captive, and he was shortly afterwards removed to Middleham Castle, in Yorkshire, where, under the care of the Archbishop of York, brother of Warwick, according to Shakespeare, he had 'good usage and great liberty.'¹ 'England,' says Lingard, 'exhibited at this moment the extraordinary spectacle of two rival kings, both in captivity; Henry in the Tower, Edward in Yorkshire.'²

Edward, however, did not long remain in captivity. A private treaty having been signed, he repaired to London, where he issued a general pardon. But in the following spring an insurrection broke out in Lincolnshire, and two knights who were among the prisoners confessed its object to have been to favour the designs of the Duke of Clarence and the Earl of Warwick. On this discovery Warwick and Clarence fled to the court of France, where Louis XI. gave them a kind reception, and where they met their hitherto determined enemy, Margaret of Anjou, the instigator of so many battles! But they were now all exiles

¹ See third part of *Henry VI.*, act iv., scenes 4 and 5. Shakespeare derived his account from Hall's Chronicle. Lingard supposed that Warwick consented to the king's liberation. The captivity of Edward is doubted by Hume, who misstates the date. On the subsequent attainder of Clarence, the imprisonment of Edward, with his connivance, was alleged against him as an offence.

² Lingard, v. 194, note.

and enemies of Edward ; so they appeased their former hatred. Margaret and the earl even arranged a marriage between her son, the young Prince Edward—who must at this time have been nearly seventeen—and Anne, Warwick's second daughter.¹ The connection was displeasing to Clarence, who had married Warwick's eldest daughter ; but it was agreed that in case of Prince Edward's death Clarence should inherit his rights, the object of both covenanting parties being to claim the succession to the throne in opposition to the new queen's family.² Louis engaged to furnish Warwick with funds sufficient for his undertaking the restoration of the House of Lancaster ; and Clarence, although from this time a less devoted friend of Warwick, continued to participate in the enterprise.

King Edward, sunk in a round of amusements, had failed to redress the popular grievances, and when the confederates, Warwick and Clarence, sent over written declarations of their desire to return and 're-establish all good customs,' it became evident that a change was again impending.

Warwick was the people's favourite ; every popular ballad recounted his praises ; his name was set forth in every public demonstration. The people distrusted Edward when no longer supported by the great earl.

On September 13, about two months after Warwick's reconciliation with Queen Margaret, the exiles, protected by a French fleet, landed at Dartmouth without opposition. Edward had been decoyed to York by a false rumour of rebellion, and the southern counties were unguarded. The king's thoughtless security was now disturbed by the most adverse rumours. The men of Kent had risen against him ; Warwick had proclaimed King Henry, and an army, constantly increasing in number, was approaching the North. Aware at length of his danger, Edward mounted his horse and rode, without stopping, to Lynn in Norfolk, to seek a refuge beyond the sea. His queen left her apartments in the Tower for the sanctuary of Westminster, where shortly afterwards her son was born, the heir not of power but of misfortune.

On October 6, Clarence and Warwick made their triumphal entry into London. The same nobleman who had, five years previously, brought King Henry so ignominiously to the Tower, now broke his bonds and conducted him to the bishop's palace,

¹ Lingard gives evidence to show that this marriage really took place.—Vol. v., note.

² This compact sufficiently shows the direction of Warwick's ambition, and the motive which led him to give his eldest daughter to Clarence.

from which, once again wearing the crown, Henry walked in solemn procession to St. Paul's Cathedral.

Parliament was summoned in Henry's name to undo its former acts; Edward IV. was declared a usurper, but honours were conferred on the Duke of Clarence, who was styled the heir to the crown, in case of the death of Henry's son. Queen Margaret was meantime received in Paris with great honour.

But not thus could Edward relinquish the kingdom. Having obtained some small assistance from the Duke of Burgundy, he embarked for England in the following spring, entered the Humber, and on March 14 landed at Ravenspur, at the very spot where Henry IV. of Lancaster had, seventy-two years before, landed to dethrone Richard II.¹ The horsemen whom he sent out 'to feel the minds of the rude people,' reported that the towns in that neighbourhood were 'stiff on the side of King Henry,' and that no one dared to speak against the sovereign who was at that time befriended by Warwick. Edward immediately resolved on trying to disguise his pretensions, and protested that he, the conqueror of Towton, the crowned King of England, now merely claimed the Duchy of York for his inheritance, and would not violate Henry's authority! Placing in his own bonnet the ostrich feather, the device of the Prince of Wales, he desired his followers to shout 'Long live King Henry!' in every village through which they passed. He thus reached the city of York, where the citizens, who had been desired by Warwick to resist his entrance, sent two of their aldermen to the gate to warn him against entering the city. But Edward, 'speaking gently to all men, and especially to aldermen, whom he called *worshipful*,' prevailed on them to allow him to enter to 'his own town from which he had both his name and title.' The credulous citizens attempted both to satisfy their consciences and to protect the right cause by requiring Edward to swear allegiance to Henry, and in presence of the clergy and corporation Edward did not scruple solemnly to abjure the pretensions which he was seeking to re-establish.² Edward's army increased as he proceeded southward, and when he reached Nottingham he was able to throw off the mask, and once more summon his subjects to his standard. Clarence then again resolved to join his brother, and gave orders that a large body of soldiers which he had lately

¹ The conduct of the Duke of Burgundy was deceitful. He had married Edward's sister, and wished well to his cause; but he dreaded his powerful neighbour, the King of France, who rejoiced in Henry's success. The duke consequently gave his aid to Edward secretly, forbidding his subjects to do the same.

² Hall's Chronicle, p. 291. Lingard, v. 207.

enlisted in the name of Henry, should mount the sign of the White Rose. London had been left under the care of Warwick's brother, the Archbishop of York, who now changed sides and ruined Warwick by admitting Edward into the city. Taking charge of Henry, Edward immediately left London, and advanced to Barnet to meet his adversaries. It was in vain that Clarence offered to mediate between his father-in-law and his brother: 'Tell your master,' cried the indignant earl to the envoy, 'that Warwick, true to his word, is a better man than the false and perjured Clarence!'

Few accurate details are preserved of the decisive battle fought at Barnet on Easter Day. On both sides the field was stoutly contested, fresh men continually taking the place of those who were slain. At one time news of Warwick's supposed victory reached London; but, whether by greater numbers or through some fatal mistake on the earl's part, Edward prevailed. Warwick, when he found victory hopeless, dismounted, and, rushing into the thickest fight, met his death sword in hand. His brother, the Marquis Montague, shared his fate.

On the afternoon of the same day, Edward returned to London with the captive king, to whom at York he had so lately sworn allegiance; offered up his standard at St. Paul's, and caused the dead bodies of Warwick and Montague to be exhibited in the cathedral, that no doubt might remain of their death.

But Margaret of Anjou survived, and on that same fatal Easter Day she landed at Weymouth with French troops. The intelligence of Warwick's destruction nearly broke her spirit, and she took refuge with her son in the Abbey of Beaulieu. Some Lancastrian lords induced her to quit that asylum, but she was met by Edward with greater forces at Tewkesbury, and both she and her son were taken captive. The young prince was brought to Edward, who asked why he returned to England, to which he replied with intrepidity, 'To preserve my father's crown and my own inheritance.' It is said that Edward, in anger, struck the young prince on the face, and Clarence, Gloucester, or some of their followers, dispatched him with their swords. There were other victims to Edward's cruelty. When, after the battle, he sought to enter the church in which many of the Lancastrian leaders had taken refuge, a priest bearing the sacred emblems refused him entrance unless he would promise to spare those within the walls. The royal promise was kept but for two days; on the third, the Duke of Somerset and others were dragged forth and speedily put to death.

As long as King Henry lived, it was still possible that some might adhere to the unfortunate monarch. That the dethroned sovereign had been allowed to survive such long periods of captivity was a proof either of some humanity, or of the contempt with which his weakness was regarded. Possibly his life might still have been spared, had not Falconberg, an old follower of Warwick's, attempted his liberation. Soon afterwards, Henry's death was announced, and the supposed murder was imputed to Edward's brother, Richard Duke of Gloucester.¹ It seems strange that so active and vindictive a partisan as Margaret was still allowed to live. But she had never been loved by the people, and now, widowed and childless, she was spared until, after confinement in the Tower and other places for five years, she was ransomed by Louis, and in 1482 ended her life in France. The young Prince Edward of York, born in the sanctuary of Westminster, was now recognised as the heir-apparent. Yet the jealousies and quarrels of the king's brothers, Clarence and Gloucester, occasioned disquietude. Anne Neville, the youngest daughter of Warwick, had been married to the Prince of Wales, who was killed after the battle of Tewkesbury. To obtain a share of Warwick's large property, Richard, although, as it was reported, he had slain the prince, sued for the hand of Anne, and prevailed upon her to become his wife, in spite of the opposition of Clarence, who had married the elder sister, and desired to engross the inheritance.² From this time the royal dukes were in secret enmity.

The assistance given by Louis XI. to the deposed royal family afforded Edward a pretext for renewing the English claims to French territory. He signed a treaty of alliance with Burgundy, and called on Parliament for assistance in a new war with France, which kingdom might, it was alleged, be divided into two independent states, the northern and eastern provinces to be held by the Duke of Burgundy, and the rest to be in the possession of the King of England. Although Parliament voted the supplies 'with unprecedented rapidity'—whether approving the enterprise or from fear of the royal authority—the king tried a plan of obtaining still further aid. He called the

¹ Lingard, v. 213. The dead body of the unfortunate king was exposed to view at St. Paul's, and it was reported, as it had been of Richard II., that he died of grief. It appears to be quite uncertain whether Richard was guilty of Henry's death. He had gone into Kent to suppress a rebellion. The records of the Pell Office show payments for Henry's obsequies at Chertsey, March 21, 1474.—'Spectator' on Mrs. Hookham's 'Margaret of Anjou.'

² Shakespeare describes this disgusting courtship in the first act of *Richard III.* Lingard, v. 219.

more wealthy citizens into his presence, and requested a present from each. No one dared refuse his solicitation; the lord mayor gave £30, each of the aldermen £16, and others accordingly. Former monarchs had repeatedly borrowed on their own security, or that of the Parliament, but Edward was the first who demanded presents, and he called the exaction '*a benevolence*!' This Parliament was too servile to remonstrate; but the strong manner in which the grievance was described at the beginning of the next reign shows that the extortion was inwardly resented.¹

At length, in June, 1475, Edward entered France with a more considerable army than England might have been expected to furnish after so much bloodshed; but he received from Burgundy less than the promised aid. Just before he crossed the sea, in conformity with the rules of chivalry, Edward sent Garter King-at-Arms to Louis, to make a formal demand of the crown of France.

Louis showed no signs of anger; he even expressed esteem for Edward's character, and declared his desire to live in amity with so illustrious a prince.

He resolved to try the influence of bribes, put three hundred crowns into the hand of the herald, and promised a thousand in case of peace. By the herald's advice, Louis tried the same influence on the king's ministers, Lords Howard and Stanley; and Edward, too dissipated and too indolent to be fond of war, was easily induced by the promise of a large pension to desist from the enterprise. A prospect of war with the English was still alarming, and Louis considered his treasure well bestowed in averting the threatened blow.² After various stipulations regarding future royal marriages, and other conditions, the two monarchs held a well-guarded interview. A bridge was thrown across the river Somme, near Amiens, on which two lodges were erected, separated by a wooden grating. The two kings met, shook hands through the grating, and swore fidelity to their engagements. Margaret of Anjou was delivered up to French commissioners, and signed a renunciation of all her rights as queen-dowager of England. Both kings were well satisfied with the pacification, but many English murmured, accusing Edward of avarice and his advisers of taking bribes. Discontent led to disorders, which the king suppressed with much firmness and severity, accompanying the judges on their circuits, and punishing all delinquents. Aware that he could not

¹ Hallam, ii. 330. Lingard, v. 221.

² Hallam, i. 84.

safely increase taxation, Edward tried to enrich himself by commerce. His ships were annually freighted with tin, wool, and cloth, and the King of England's merchandise was exposed for sale in the ports of Italy and Greece.

On the death of the Duke of Burgundy, about the beginning of 1477, his daughter became the heiress of his great possessions. The Duke of Clarence, recently a widower, immediately sought her hand, but was obstructed in his suit by Edward, and from that time the brothers again became declared enemies. Stacey, a servant of Clarence, was accused of practising the arts of magic.

Thomas Burdett, also holding a situation in the duke's household, when irritated by the king's having shot his favourite stag, was said to have uttered treasonable words. Stacey and Burdett were arraigned together, charged with calculating the nativities of the king and prince, also with having circulated seditious ballads, and were executed.¹

The Duke of Clarence protested in vain on behalf of his servants; it was charged against him that he had attempted to persuade the people that 'Thomas Burdett was wrongfully put to death,' and Edward, after personally upbraiding his brother with insulting the administration of justice, caused him to stand at the bar of the House of Lords under a charge of high treason. The king himself conducted the prosecution, and called his witnesses. He described Clarence's several past acts, alleging that Clarence had been in league with his enemies, had deprived him of liberty, and had sought to dethrone him. All this had been forgiven. But Edward now charged him with circulating attacks against his character and aspersions against the justice of his government, besides other kinds of disloyalty; the reply to which has not been preserved. None of the peers ventured to speak in favour of a prince whom the king was evidently determined to ruin. All were silent while the royal brothers held their fierce debate; the Lords then found Clarence guilty, and the Duke of Buckingham, a descendant of Edward III., who had been appointed high steward for the occasion, pronounced the sentence of death. The Commons, with eager loyalty, besought the king to bring his brother to execution; but Edward disapproved of further publicity.

About ten days afterwards it was announced that the duke had died in the Tower, and the manner of his death remains one of the secrets of that royal prison-house. According to a foolish

¹ Burdett, 'a friend and servant of the Duke of Clarence,' says Hallam, 'was sacrificed as a preliminary victim.'—*'Middle Ages,'* ii. 329.

rumour, he was drowned in a butt of malmsey wine. This cruel act, 'for which a brother could not be pardoned,' even had Clarence been guilty, 'deepens,' says Hallam, 'the shadow of a tyrannical age.'¹

An expedition against James III. of Scotland, whom Edward had hoped to make a lasting ally by the marriage of their children, cost the king much money, but gave him possession of Berwick—an acquisition, however, which was a great annual expense. Edward well knew that the rapid elevation of the queen's relations had been resented by the old nobility, and when, attacked by sudden illness, he felt the approach of death, he summoned the heads of the rival Houses, exhorted them to amity, and conjured them to embrace in his presence.²

Edward died in his forty-first year, the twenty-first of his reign, and was buried at Windsor. He left two young sons, Edward Prince of Wales, in his twelfth year, and Richard Duke of York, one year younger. 'The reign of Edward IV.,' says Hallam, 'was a reign of terror,' and the cruelties committed were by no means confined to the usual vindictive retaliations of civil war; it was also the first reign, after a very long period, during which 'no Act was passed for the redress of grievances.'³

Yet, notwithstanding numerous acts of cruelty and injustice, Edward was very far from being an unpopular king. His affability and courage procured him friends, and restored him to the throne even when Warwick's prodigious influence was against him. It is related that during the summer before his death, Edward invited the mayor and aldermen of London to his country seat, 'to hunt and make pastime, also sending to their wives plenty of venison,' which gained him many hearts 'amongst the common people, which oftentimes more esteem a little courtesy than a great profit or benefit.'⁴ There were, indeed, many acts of cruelty for which to atone. It is said that a citizen of London, who had over his shop the sign of 'The Crown,' jocularly said that he would make his son 'heir to the Crown,' and that he was executed in consequence of this hasty speech. Sir Thomas Coke, at one time lord mayor of London, was tried and found guilty of misprision of treason upon the testimony of a single witness under torture, 'only' says the chronicler, 'because he had happened to favour

¹ Hallam, ii. 329. Lingard, v. 227.

² See Shakespeare, second act of *Richard III.*

³ Hallam, ii. 327-8.

⁴ Hall, p. 346.

those whom the prince favoured not.'¹ Among the adherents of Henry VI. was Vere, Earl of Oxford, who, having escaped to France after the battle of Barnet, afterwards adopted the life of a pirate, and with a squadron of small vessels continually molested the English coasts, receiving supplies from the friends of the Lancastrians, and plundering the Yorkists. Vere had possession of the strong fortress of St. Michael's Mount, in Cornwall, but was besieged and compelled to surrender to the sheriff: his life was granted him; and during his confinement in the castle of Ham, in Picardy, which lasted eleven years, his countess—a sister of the great Warwick—was compelled to support herself by her needlework.

At length the earl escaped from captivity, and once again drew his sword on the Lancastrian side at the battle of Bosworth. At the beginning of this reign complaint was made in Parliament of the great number of followers who wore the badges of the great noblemen, a practice which led to frequent breaches of the peace.

A private conflict in Norfolk in 1468 bears witness to the weakness of the general government. One of the Paston family, who claimed a right to Caistor Castle, held it against the Duke of Norfolk, and was regularly besieged until he surrendered for want of provisions, and two of the besiegers were killed. It does not appear that the Government interfered.²

Another and much more serious instance took place in Gloucestershire about two years afterwards, when a private grievance resulted in battle. A lawsuit respecting Berkeley Castle had been carried on for nearly two hundred years, during which the castle had been repeatedly besieged and blood had been shed, when at last Lord Lisle challenged his adversary, Lord Berkeley, to decide the possession by single combat, or by bringing into the field 'the utmost of his power.' Lord Berkeley accepted the last proposal, as being more according to English usage, and is said to have mustered a thousand men. The battle, which was fought at Nibley Green, in Gloucestershire, in 1470, ended in the death of Lord Lisle and a hundred and fifty men. Berkeley then proceeded to Lord Lisle's house, which he ransacked like a place taken in ordinary war. Both of these were adherents of Edward IV. The widow of Lord Lisle appealed against Lord Berkeley and his brothers on account of

¹ Hall, p. 309, and Jardine's *State Trials*, i. 14.

² Hallam, ii. 207. The siege of Caistor Castle is mentioned in vol. v. of Blomefield's *'History of Norfolk,'* and in the *'Paston Letters,'* vol. iv.

the death of her husband, but the affair was compromised without trial; she renounced her claim to the disputed lands on receiving an annuity of a hundred pounds, and the agreement was ratified by Parliament without further notice being taken of the battle or its consequences.¹

But although such occurrences proved the weakness or timidity of the administration, writings which are still extant testify to the sound principles of government held by the best English statesmen. Sir John Fortescue, chief justice, having escaped from the bloody field of Towton, accompanied Margaret and her son during their exile, and was intrusted with the young prince's education. During his exile, Fortescue composed a treatise on the English laws, written purposely for the instruction of the prince who hoped to reign over England, in which he clearly enforced that the power given to rulers was limited by law, and should be employed for the protection of the people. He contrasted the state of England with that of France, describing the English as in a more prosperous condition, dwelt on the advantage of trial by jury, and stated that in no other country could be found equal numbers of substantial yeomen, qualified to serve as jurors; moreover, he mentioned, as one point of superiority, that the use of torture to obtain evidence had been held unjustifiable since the grant of Magna Charta, even if still occasionally employed.²

¹ See Allen's 'Inquiry into the Royal Prerogative,' p. 123, where reference is made to Dugdale's 'Baronage,' i. 362; Atkyn's 'Gloucestershire,' and Rymer's 'Fœdera,' &c. But Mr. Allen says that after the Conquest there are few memorials of private war on an extensive scale.

² Hallam, ii. 283-286. Lingard also speaks of this treatise by Sir John Fortescue, as 'deserving of attention, because it shows what notions prevailed at that period respecting the nature of the English Constitution and the liberties of the subject.'—'History,' v. 217, note.

CHAPTER XXI.

EDWARD V. PROCLAIMED KING. RICHARD III. CROWNED.

A.D. 1483-1485.

ATTACKED by a fatal illness in the maturity of life, and well assured that the rapid elevation of the queen's relations had never been forgiven by the old nobility, Edward must have trembled for his sons. Fourteen years had passed since the queen's father and brother were slain, by the order, it was said, of Clarence and Warwick, after the battle of Edgecote. Another of her brothers had succeeded to the title of Lord Rivers, and Edward's last act had been the attempt to reconcile his councillors by an order to embrace in his presence. That forced reconciliation lasted for a few days only, and it is scarcely to be believed that so consummate a dissembler could have trusted to its duration. He had himself caused his brother Clarence to be arraigned before Parliament and to be removed by a mysterious death.¹ Warwick, 'the king-maker,' had been slain at the battle of Barnet; but the dying sovereign left still another brother—Richard Duke of Gloucester, on whom honours had been heaped at an early age. He had led the vanguard at Barnet and had assisted in gaining the crowning victory of Tewkesbury. He was most successful in conquest of every kind; he had plunged a dagger into the breast of the young Edward Plantagenet, son of Henry VI., yet married his widow, daughter of the Earl of Warwick! The marriage of Anne to Gloucester, which took place early in 1478, had encountered Clarence's strenuous resistance, and this was probably the cause of his death.²

When Edward died, the Duke of Gloucester was on the

¹ February, 1478.

² Lingard, v. 219-229, and others, respecting Gloucester's complicity in the death of Clarence.

northern border with the army, having just returned from a victorious incursion into Scotland. The Council meantime, in which the queen's relations still held a prominent place, had already proclaimed the young prince as King Edward V. The queen had sent her son to Ludlow Castle, in Shropshire, under the care of her brothers, Lords Rivers and Grey, and now proposed that these noblemen should conduct him to London under the protection of an army. But Lord Hastings and other opponents of the Woodvilles objected so strongly to the proposal that Elizabeth acquiesced in limiting the retinue to 2,000 horsemen.

Meanwhile the Duke of Gloucester set a fine example of loyalty, announcing his intention to assist at his nephew's coronation, which was fixed for May 4. He proceeded to York, attended by 600 knights and esquires, in mourning, celebrated the late king's obsequies in the cathedral with much magnificence, summoned the gentlemen of Yorkshire to swear allegiance to Edward V., and was himself the first to take the oath. He wrote in affectionate terms to Elizabeth, and offered his friendship to Earl Rivers and the other members of her family. Having thus done everything to abate the distrust of his opponents, Gloucester, with a considerable retinue, arrived on April 29 at Northampton, where he was joined by his relation, the Duke of Buckingham, with a suite of 300 horsemen.

The Lords Rivers and Grey, with their charge, the young Edward, had already reached Stony-Stratford on their way to London. They hastened to welcome Gloucester in the name of the young king, desiring his advice concerning the royal entry into the city. Having dined together, they rode in apparent friendship to the entrance of Stony-Stratford, when, suddenly, Gloucester turned angrily towards the two lords, accusing them of having estranged from him his nephew's affection. It was vain for Rivers and Grey to deny the charge; they were immediately arrested, as were also two knights, named Vaughan and Howse, young Edward's confidential servants, and the four prisoners were conveyed under a strong guard to Pontefract Castle. The young king, overcome by grief at the loss of his friends, was desired by Gloucester to depend on *his* affection, and conducted back to Northampton. When Elizabeth heard of these events she foreboded the ruin of her family, and retired, with her second son, Richard, her five daughters, and the Marquis of Dorset, to the sanctuary at Westminster. The Earl of Warwick, when her declared enemy, had respected that asylum, and surely she might trust that it

would not be violated by a brother-in-law who had sworn allegiance to her son! Meanwhile, London, in anxious suspense, awaited the arrival of Gloucester and Buckingham.

On May 4, the day first fixed for the coronation, Gloucester brought his captive nephew to London. At Hornsey they were met by the lord mayor and aldermen, followed by five hundred citizens in holiday apparel. Edward wore a long mantle of blue velvet; his attendants were dressed in deep mourning. Gloucester rode before the young king bare-headed, and directed towards him the loyal acclamations of the citizens.

Edward was lodged in the bishop's palace, and immediately received the homage of the prelates, lords, and commoners. A great council had been summoned, which sat for several days; the king was removed to the Tower, and his coronation was deferred to June 22. Several alterations were made in the higher appointments, and the Duke of Gloucester, who resided at Crosby Place, in Bishopsgate Street, was nominated Protector, and assumed the lofty style of 'Brother and Uncle of Kings and Lord Admiral of England!' Preparatory to the coronation a summons was sent to forty-eight lords and gentlemen to attend and receive knighthood, a measure by which Gloucester tried to conceal his hostile designs. Soon afterwards he issued orders to his retainers in the North to assemble in London to protect him from the bloody designs of the queen and her kinsmen. On entering the council-chamber at the Tower he affected anger at a remark made by Lord Hastings, and called that nobleman a traitor. A body of armed men, attending the Protector's bidding, promptly arrested Hastings, Stanley, and the Bishops of York and Ely. Hastings was told to prepare for immediate execution; a priest was at hand to receive his confession, and he was beheaded on a piece of timber which lay on Tower Green. The three other prisoners were conveyed to separate cells, and a proclamation was immediately issued charging Hastings and his friends with conspiracy against the lives of the Dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham, who had narrowly escaped the snare.

On that day, June 13, the Protector's alleged danger was announced in Yorkshire. Ratcliffe, one of Gloucester's boldest partisans, entered Pontefract Castle, upon which Lord Grey, with the two knights, and, a few days later, Lord Rivers, were executed in presence of a multitude, without any judicial forms. After these executions, a letter from Gloucester, recounting the traitorous designs of the queen and her relations,

was delivered to the mayor of York, and proclamations were issued calling upon the northern retainers of the Nevilles to hasten to London to defend the Protector, his cousin the Duke of Buckingham, 'and the old royal blood of the realm.'¹

Hastings and Stanley, no friends of the Woodvilles, but devoted to the royal family, might have defended the young princes. Richard the younger was with his mother at the sanctuary, and on June 16 the duke proceeded in his barge to Westminster, accompanied by noblemen and prelates and by a large body of armed men. The queen is said to have been 'sitting alone on the rushes, all desolate and dismayed,' when the Archbishop of Canterbury was sent in by Gloucester to demand the young prince.² Totally powerless, Elizabeth burst into tears on parting with her son. The innocent victim was led with great pomp to the Tower, where his brother Edward was residing, and for a short time the two boys enjoyed each other's company untroubled and unsuspecting. The next step was to circulate aspersions against the late king, denying the legality of his marriage with Elizabeth Grey. The Duke of Gloucester now pretended to the character of guardian of the public morals. Jane Shore, the wife of an opulent citizen, had been separated from her husband on account of the attentions lavished on her by the late king. Her husband was now dead, and, as punishment for her past offences, Gloucester deprived her of her plate and jewels, which he appropriated to his own use, and she was condemned by the decree of the ecclesiastical court to walk barefoot through the streets of London, carrying a lighted taper. Thus did moral influence combine with military supremacy in support of Gloucester. Having collected in London twenty thousand armed men, he ordered Dr. Shaw, the brother of the lord mayor, to preach at St. Paul's Cross in severe terms against the immoral conduct of Edward IV., and to maintain that, owing to a previous contract with another lady, Edward's marriage with Elizabeth was illegal. In that case, the young princes had no right to the succession. The preacher even expressed a doubt whether the late king was really the son of Richard Duke of York, who first contended with the House of Lancaster. The late king had, said the preacher, no resemblance to Duke Richard. 'But,' exclaimed he, when, as if by accident, the Protector showed himself at a balcony, 'here, in the Duke of Gloucester, we have the very likeness of that hero.'

¹ Lingard, v. 244.

² Hall's Chronicle.

Having urgently requested the nobles to keep the peace in their respective counties, Richard set off on July 23 on a journey through a great part of the kingdom. He visited Oxford, Woodstock, Gloucester, and Worcester, administering justice and receiving petitions. At Warwick he was joined by the queen and several of the nobility, and proceeded through Leicester, Nottingham, and other towns, to York, where he had long been popular. There, for the gratification of the northern people, the ceremony of the coronation was repeated, and the king and queen were again attired in the splendid dresses which had been sent from London for the occasion.¹

But at the time when Richard was thus employed, the minds of his subjects in the South of England turned with interest and compassion towards those two young princes imprisoned in the Tower, who were withdrawn from the sight of all men. The usurper, who had caused peers and knights to be put to death without trial, had yet reason to fear the indignation of a people trained to arms, and against whom he could indeed bring a body of personal retainers, but no disciplined force.² Meetings were held privately in Kent, Essex, Berkshire, and other western counties, where a resolution was passed to appeal to arms in defence of the injured princes. The Duke of Buckingham, although as Richard's tool he had played the orator so deceitfully, now, from some unknown motive, engaged with these confederates in the attempt to restore the crown to the young Edward, who had for so short a time been called king. Buckingham had married the sister of Elizabeth Grey. Possibly his heart relented in view of the cruel fate of his wife's nephews, or he was won over by the pleading of the Bishop of Ely, who had been committed to his charge. But the hopes of this party were raised for the moment only to be crushed by the intelligence that the young princes were no longer alive.

The exact manner of their death remained a mystery. The most probable account, according to Lingard, is, that after Richard had tried in vain to corrupt the governor of the Tower, he despatched Sir James Tyrrel, his master of the horse, with orders to take the command there for twenty-four hours. During the night Tyrrel sent two of his low followers, Forest and Dighton, to the chamber in which the two princes were sleeping, where they smothered them in their bed-clothes, and buried the bodies at the foot of the staircase. Bones believed to be those of the murdered princes were found at the stairs of

¹ Lingard, v. 254.

² See Macaulay's History, i. 40.

the White Tower in 1674, and were honourably interred in Henry VII.'s chapel at Westminster Abbey.¹

Although the immediate design of the conspirators was thus frustrated, popular detestation of Richard was increased. Those who had already advanced too far to recede with safety discovered another candidate for the crown in Henry, the young Earl of Richmond, a descendant on the mother's side from John of Gaunt, and a possible suitor for the hand of the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV. They saw in such a marriage the prospective union of the rival lines.² Queen Elizabeth, her friends, the Countess of Richmond and Duke of Buckingham, were all favourable to this proposal, and a messenger was sent to Brittany to hasten the return of Richmond, and to announce a general rising as about to take place on October 18. That rising took place on the appointed day: the Marquis of Dorset, the son of Queen Elizabeth, proclaimed Henry at Exeter; the Bishop of Salisbury in Wiltshire; others at Maidstone and Newbury, and the Duke of Buckingham unfurled his standard at Brecon. Soon afterwards Richard joined his army and published an address, protesting that he was the defender of justice and morality, and promising rewards for the apprehension of Buckingham and his associates. Fortune for a time favoured him. Tempestuous weather hindered Richmond's landing in Devonshire. Buckingham, obliged to retreat, took refuge in the hut of one Banister, a retainer in Shropshire, but was betrayed, and afterwards executed at Salisbury by the king's command. A knight named St. Leger, who had married the Duchess of Exeter, Richard's sister, and for whom a large ransom was offered, was also left for execution. Having thus done much to intimidate his enemies, and further enjoining the Vice-Constable of England to judge the rebels, 'without noise,' and without appeal to his clemency, Richard returned to London and summoned Parliament. The assembly which met in November, 1483, proved its subserviency by complying with all the king's wishes, confirmed his 'undoubted' right to the crown, and entailed the same upon his son, Edward Prince of Wales, whose succession the lords spiritual and temporal bound themselves to uphold.

A bill of attainder followed, which, although a common

¹ Lingard, v. 256, and note A.

² The Countess of Richmond, who had been called upon to bear the train of Richard's queen at the late coronation, was great-granddaughter of John Duke of Lancaster. The Duke of Buckingham was similarly descended from Thomas Duke of Gloucester, the sixth son of Edward III., the Duke of Lancaster being an elder brother.

measure in these turbulent times, is said to have been of unprecedented severity. It included five noblemen, three bishops, and many knights and gentlemen; the forfeiture of their rich estates served both to increase the royal revenue, and reward the king's northern partisans. The late disaffection lay principally in the southern counties; on these fell the punishment, and some of the king's northern adherents were transplanted into the south as spies upon the disaffected.¹ Among the attainted was the Countess of Richmond, the lady who had so lately borne Queen Anne's train at the coronation. But as her husband, Lord Stanley, succeeded in convincing Richard of his own loyalty and promised to watch over her, she was spared an execution which would too grievously have offended the nation.

Yet this, Richard III.'s only Parliament, which confirmed so many acts of tyranny, was still careful to effect something for the public weal. 'After reciting in the strongest terms the late grievances, it abrogates and annuls for ever all exactions under the name of benevolence.'²

To advance his own claims and those of his son, Richard had denied the legal marriage of Edward IV. and Elizabeth, and caused the queen of his late brother to be designated merely as Lady Grey. But the news from Brittany filled him with apprehension. At a meeting in that province at Christmas, Henry of Richmond received the homage of five hundred English exiles, and declared his intention, so soon as he should overcome the usurper, to marry the Princess Elizabeth, and thus confirm his title to the throne.³

The hereditary claim of the Earl of Richmond was but weak. On his father's side he was descended from Owen Tudor, the Welsh gentleman who became the second husband of Catherine, widow of Henry V.; on his mother's side from John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset, an illegitimate son of John of Gaunt. The partisans of the House of Lancaster looked to the Countess of Richmond and her son as their natural chiefs; those of the House of York maintained that, after the death of the late king's young sons, the succession should devolve on his daughter. Richard saw the danger, and suddenly changed his policy. The marriage of Richmond and Elizabeth must in some way be

¹ Lingard, v. 260.

² Hallam's Middle Ages, ii. 330.

³ Elizabeth was the eldest daughter of Edward IV., and had been in childhood affianced to the Dauphin. Although affianced, she remained in England. No suspicion rested on her birth, but when Louis XI. neglected the engagement in order that his son might marry Margaret of Burgundy, her father was greatly incensed.

prevented. The ex-queen, whom he had degraded and whose children he had destroyed, must now be beguiled out of sanctuary and assured of the king's future friendship and protection; and it is said that a marriage was planned between her eldest daughter and the youthful Prince of Wales.¹ But that young prince, the only child of Richard and his queen, suddenly died, to the great grief of both his parents. The king for the present, therefore, contrived to keep Elizabeth at court in attendance on the queen. He now declared the young Earl of Lincoln, son of his sister, the Duchess of Suffolk, heir-apparent to the crown, and devised a union between the sister of that young earl, Anne de la Pole, and the eldest son of the King of Scotland.

Rumours were soon afterwards circulated concerning the declining health of the queen, and Richard, since Elizabeth could not become his daughter-in-law, already projected her elevation to be the partner of his throne. But even the viler instruments of Richard's crimes—Ratcliffe, through whom the murders were perpetrated at Pontefract, and Catesby, on whose advice he usually relied—both warned him that such a marriage would at once arouse the censure of the clergy, and be viewed by the people with horror.² When the queen shortly afterwards died, her life was supposed to have been shortened by poison, and it was urged that the men of the northern counties, whose support was chiefly based upon their attachment to Anne as the daughter of the great Earl of Warwick, would deeply resent such an insult to her memory. With reluctance Richard yielded, and tried to dispose of the rumour by solemnly assuring the lord mayor and corporation, in the great hall of the Temple, that such a marriage had ever been far from his contemplation. He wrote to the same effect to the citizens of York, desiring that the persons who had circulated these injurious reports should be forthwith brought to punishment. The difficulties which beset the king increased day by day. The treasures left by his brother, increased as they had been by forfeitures, were expended, and he dared not again summon a Parliament.

In spite of his own declaration that it was unconstitutional to require 'a benevolence,' he now replenished his coffers by sums extorted from the most wealthy citizens, an exaction to which the people gave the reverse title of 'malevolence.'³

¹ The young prince could be scarcely ten years of age. Elizabeth, born in 1466, was eighteen.

² In Shakespeare's play of *Richard III.*, Sir William Catesby is continually brought upon the scene as one of the king's most compliant instruments in his wicked purpose. Shakespeare drew his historical sketches from Hall's Chronicle.

³ Lingard, v. 266, and note.

He continually heard of fresh defections even among those on whose fidelity he had the most relied. At length came the fatal news: Henry of Richmond had raised an army of three thousand men, mostly Normans, with the permission of the new King of France, Charles VIII., and a fleet was in a French harbour ready to transport these forces to England. Whatever dismay Richard might feel, he dissembled his misgivings, and in a long and artful proclamation, endeavoured to cast every possible calumny on those who were preparing to attack his throne, calling the King of France the ancient enemy of England.

After sending orders for the defence of the coast, and establishing horse-posts on the high roads for the transmission of intelligence, Richard sent for the Great Seal, and fixed his headquarters at Nottingham, as a centre from which to watch the attempts of his enemies. Richmond sailed from Harfleur on August 1; on the 7th he landed at Milford Haven, and proceeded through the north of Wales, a tract of country known to be in the interest of the Stanleys, but when he reached Shrewsbury his army did not exceed 4,000 men. A week passed before Richard heard of his landing; he then instantly despatched orders for a general muster of forces at Leicester, with the most severe threats against defaulters. The Duke of Norfolk brought up the men of the eastern counties, the Earl of Northumberland the northern levies, and Lord Lovell those of Hampshire; but Lord Stanley, whom Richard had long feared, and had endeavoured to attach to the royal household, was absent, and sent an excuse on the plea of illness. His son, Lord Strange, who had been detained at Court as a hostage when Stanley asked permission to visit his estates, now attempted to escape, but was arrested, and was induced to confess that his uncle, Sir William Stanley, the chamberlain of North Wales, had promised to join the invaders. He professed that his father was unaware of this intention, and would shortly appear on the king's side. Richard, no doubt distrusting the assurance, desired Lord Strange to write to his father to accelerate his march if he desired to save the life of his son.

The numerous and well-appointed army which assembled at Leicester might have proved victorious, had it been attached to the king. Henry meanwhile, encouraged by secret adherents, pressed forward towards the centre of England. At Newport he was joined by the tenantry of the Talbots; at Stafford he had a conference privately with Sir William Stanley, and consented, if it should appear the on¹ - - which the life of

Lord Strange could be saved, that the Stanleys should appear hostile to his cause and retire before him. Richard rode from Leicester on August 21, distinguished by the crown, and encamped about two miles from Bosworth.

That same night Henry proceeded to Atherston, encouraged by continual arrivals of deserters from the royal army. Still in the morning the army of Richard, which advanced to Redmore, numbered thrice as many as that of Henry; the vanguards, commanded by the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Oxford, engaged, but Richard saw with dismay that the Stanleys were opposed to him, that the Earl of Northumberland remained inactive, and that his men were wavering. He gave orders that Lord Strange should be beheaded, but that young nobleman contrived to escape in the confusion, and rejoined his father. Chancing to recognise Henry, Richard resolved upon a bold attempt for the victory; spurring his horse, and thrice exclaiming 'Treason!' he slew with his own hand Sir William Brandon, Richmond's standard-bearer, and aimed a desperate blow at Henry, but he was overpowered by numbers and immediately slain. Lord Stanley, taking up the crown—which is said to have been one of an ornamental kind, not the splendid and massive crown used at a coronation—placed it on Henry's head, and shouts were instantly raised in honour of Henry VII. Richard's body was stripped, laid across a horse, and conducted to Leicester, where, after it had been exposed to view for two days, it was buried with little ceremony at the church of the Greyfriars.

Henry entered the town in royal state, as Richard had left it on the preceding day. He did not sully his victory by needless bloodshed. In the battle and pursuit the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Ferrers, and about 3,000 others, were killed, but of all the prisoners three only were put to death, one of whom was the notorious Catesby.

The physical deformity of Richard has been doubtless much exaggerated. His strength in martial exercises appears incompatible with such malformation as was described by succeeding writers, and has been handed down through Shakespeare; and when Buckingham pointed him out to the London citizens as so strongly resembling his father, the popular Duke of York, whose name he bore, it appears improbable that his deformity was extreme. Popular writers took pleasure in exaggerating some irregularity of figure, and represented the wicked usurper as a monster whose ugliness equalled his barbarity.

He was the last of the Plantagenet kings.

All civil wars are apt to divide friends. An interesting example is related concerning Sir John Byron and Sir Gervase Clifton, friendly neighbours in Nottinghamshire, who were opponents on the field of Bosworth. They are said to have agreed that, in case either fell in battle, the survivor should endeavour to obtain the restitution of the forfeited lands for the bereaved family. Byron, who fought on Henry's side, saw Clifton fall in the opposite ranks. He ran to aid him, supported him on his shield, and entreated him to surrender. Clifton, being mortally wounded, could only remind his friend of the promise relating to his children; and, through Byron's exertions, the Clifton estate was allowed to remain in the possession of the lineal heirs.¹

The civil wars of the rival Houses of York and Lancaster lasted upwards of thirty years; during which time twelve great battles were fought; eight princes of the royal race fell, and the ancient nobility suffered great destruction. Rival princes had passed from the throne to prison, and from prison had again been placed upon the throne, Parliament being hastily summoned to sanction the acts of the conqueror. But in a country of scanty population, as England then was—the national wealth mostly consisting in flocks and herds—the calamities of war were confined chiefly to slaughter on the field of battle, and affected the people at large but little.² A period not so much of greater liberty as of better defended order was now beginning. No king of England, after this time, lost his crown and his life together on the battle-field, like Richard, or there anticipated the ceremony of coronation, like Henry VII. The narration of such frequent acts of gross and lawless cruelty might lead to the belief that the government at this unhappy period was under no legal restraint, and that England could little deserve the praise given at that time by an enlightened Frenchman respecting her political liberty.³ Legal equality, 'freedom from the oppressive superiority of a privileged order, was peculiar to England.' Nowhere else did the people possess by law so much security for their personal freedom and property. In England even noblemen were subject to the laws and paid their contribution to the public burdens—a degree of equality unknown in France before the great Revolution of 1789. Englishmen, who felt themselves protected by law, repaid the obligation by a steady attachment to the laws of

¹ Turner, iii. 526, note.

² Macaulay, i. 35.

³ Philip de Comines, the old French historian, descanted on the political advantages enjoyed in England. See Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 289, and Macaulay's 'History,' i. 37.

their country. Of late, indeed, the established safeguards had been in numerous cases violated; 'impositions, prompted by rapacity, had been endured through compulsion;' yet the people were mindful of their privileges, and after the many acts of violence which stained the reign of Edward IV., the leaders who invited Richard to assume the crown reminded him that they would rather submit to personal danger than continue to live under the late thralldom.

Richard III., although he trampled on the nobility, was fearful of rousing the resentment of the people.¹ The liberties of this country were at least not *directly* impaired by Richard III.; but the general privileges of the nation were far more secure than those of private men, and although the laws were severe against theft, and capital punishment was continually inflicted, these had little effect in repressing acts of violence arising from the rude state of society and the imperfect protection of the public peace. Although the peasantry had for the most part been gradually raised from servitude, instances of the impressment of workmen are nevertheless recorded, which prove how unjustly they might be treated. Richard, who was fond of music, gave orders to one of the gentlemen of his chapel to seize for his use any singers whom he could find, in monasteries or cathedrals, suitable for the chapel service; and a warrant still exists for the seizure of such artificers, materials, and carriages as were required for the architectural works at York Castle.² Although, legally, no man could be committed to prison without a warrant stating his offence, and although, according to law, imprisonment must be speedily followed by trial before a jury, persons obnoxious to the government were frequently imprisoned by the king's order alone.

The great safeguards now afforded by public opinion and the rapid transmission of intelligence did not then exist, and the wrongs of individuals came but seldom to the knowledge of the public.³

The population of England is considered at this time not to have much exceeded three millions, and the inhabitants of London and Westminster were numbered at about sixty or seventy thousand.

But, in spite of the destructive civil wars, the country was increasing in wealth, and the woollen manufacture which had been established in different parts of England was beginning

¹ Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' i. 7.

² Turner, vol. iv.

³ Macaulay, i. 32.

to supply foreign nations. Navigators were learning the use of the compass, and undertook longer voyages, and the man who was destined to show the way to the other hemisphere was already maturing his plans.

The proud Earl of Warwick left no successor. 'He was,' says Hume, 'the greatest as well as the last of those mighty barons who formerly overawed the crown.' The old nobility had looked with contempt on 'the Wydviles,' the relations of Edward IV.'s queen; but Lord Rivers, the queen's brother, was distinguished by his learning, and was the kind patron of William Caxton, the first English printer. Caxton's press was set up in a spare chamber of Westminster Abbey, some time between 1471 and 1477, and was employed in printing *The Chronicles of England*, Chaucer's *Poems*, '*Reynard the Fox*,' and Cicero's '*Golden Treatises*.' Books had borne so high a price as to be scarcely purchased freely even by the wealthy, and their binding was very costly. Edward IV. is said to have paid twenty shillings for the binding of one volume—a sum which would have been the price of an ox in those days; and Edward III. paid to the Abbot of St. Alban's fifty pounds' weight of silver for less than forty volumes.¹

¹ See Hallam, ii. 519, and Knight's '*Biography of Caxton*.'

CHAPTER XXII.

HENRY VII.

A.D. 1485—1509.

AT the accession of Henry VII., Hallam ends his history of the Middle Ages—that period of a thousand years, dating from the disruption of the Roman empire; and commences his ‘Constitutional History of England.’ But no great change of constitutional policy marks this era. The first establishment of the most essential privileges of Englishmen was secured in the time of the Plantagenets. Under the House of Tudor a period commenced when the great nobility possessed far less power, whilst, on the contrary, wealth was more generally diffused—a period of improved order, but ‘less distinguished by the spirit of freedom.’ At no time, indeed, was it difficult to find cases of oppression in violation of the law; in short, ‘the general privileges of the nation were far more secure than those of private men.’¹

Although no opposition was made to Henry’s accession, and his reign was considered to commence immediately after his victory at Bosworth, he was at first perplexed how he should best justify his claim to the crown.

The House of Lancaster, through which alone he could trace royal descent, had been previously rejected by Parliament, and he dared not mention the right of conquest, for which even William the Conqueror had tried to substitute inheritance. Richard III. had named his nephew, John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, as his successor. Henry despised his pretensions, but viewed with anxiety the young Edward Plantagenet, only in his fifteenth year, son of the late Duke of Clarence, to whom Edward IV. gave the title of his grandfather, the Earl of Warwick, but who was confined by Richard in the castle of Sheriff-Hutton, in Yorkshire. Henry’s first act was to have this young prince

¹ Hallam’s ‘Middle Ages,’ ii., conclusion of chap. viii., and ‘Constitutional History,’ i. 5. Likewise Lord Macaulay, i. 25, 40.

removed to the Tower, and to send noblemen to conduct the Princess Elizabeth from the same place of imprisonment to her mother's residence in London.

The new king entered London on August 28, where he was received with rejoicings, and greeted as the deliverer of his country.

The standards brought from Bosworth were carried before him in triumph, and offered on the altar of St. Paul's. The coronation was delayed, on account of an epidemic, until October 30, after which Henry immediately summoned Parliament, and took the occasion, when the Commons presented to him their speaker, to declare that he had 'come to the throne by just title of inheritance, and by the sure judgment of God, who had given him the victory over his enemies in the field.'

To prevent any alarm arising from these words, Henry promised that all should continue in enjoyment of their rights and possessions, unless punished by the present Parliament. When the members returned to their own House they were perplexed by the question how far the outlawry pronounced by a former Parliament against a great part of their assembly would affect the validity of their acts. The king had been himself attainted. A general reversal of attainders took place, and an Act of Settlement was passed shortly enacting that 'the inheritance of the crown should abide in the most royal person of the then sovereign lord, King Henry VII., and his heirs.'

When the Commons presented 'the usual grant of tonnage and poundage for life,' they ventured to express the general hope that the king would be pleased to marry Elizabeth, the daughter of Edward IV., and thus unite for ever the White with the Red Rose. The lords and bishops signified their concurrence in this desire by rising and bowing to the throne, and Henry graciously answered that he was willing to comply with their request.

He appears to have wished to establish his sovereignty independently of Elizabeth's pretensions as the representative of the House of York, but he must have been sensible that the union would tend to reconcile rival factions, and that her title was better than his own. He might naturally feel little personal cordiality for a princess who is said to have become so weary of the sanctuary that she was ready to become the partaker of Richard's throne. The marriage, so much desired by the nation, was solemnised in January, 1486. The people of the

¹ Lingard, v. 276. The judges decided that, in regard to the king, the crown conferred legality without requiring any reversal of attainder.

North of England had been much attached to the House of York, and in the spring Henry made a royal progress to gain their goodwill. He was at Lincoln, keeping the Easter festival, when the news came of an impending insurrection. Lord Lovell, a partisan of York, who had been recently attainted, had left the sanctuary at Colchester with two brothers named Stafford, had raised a force, and was preparing to surprise the king at his entry into York. Henry was attended by most of the nobility, whose followers formed a considerable army, and was easily able to send off a sufficient force, under the Duke of Bedford, to disperse the insurgents, to whom he readily offered pardon on submission. Lord Lovell escaped to Flanders.

Henry entered York on April 20 with a magnificent retinue, and stayed there some weeks dispensing favours, after which he made a circuit towards London, and received a splendid embassy from James III. of Scotland, readily agreeing to a truce to last during the lives of the two monarchs.¹ In the autumn the birth of a prince—to whom the king gave the favourite name of Arthur, the old British ruler, from whom he wished to claim descent—gave general satisfaction. But the national peace was shortly afterwards disturbed by an extraordinary imposture. Public sympathy had been excited by the imprisonment of the young Edward Plantagenet in the Tower, and the king's enemies insinuated that the life of the poor young prisoner was in danger.

In the autumn of 1486 a priest named Richard Simons came from Oxford to Dublin, and introduced to the Earl of Kildare, the lord deputy, a youth whom he called Edward Plantagenet, stating that he had just escaped from danger of death in the Tower. The youth was Lambert Simnel, the son of a carpenter, but he was pleasing in appearance, and had been well trained for the part assigned him, describing with apparent accuracy his mode of life when imprisoned in Yorkshire and afterwards in the Tower, and the way in which he had escaped. Most of the English settlers in Ireland were Yorkists, and Kildare, who inclined to believe the boy to be the young Plantagenet, allowed him to be publicly introduced to the chief persons at Dublin under that name, promising him his protection. Part of the noblemen and prelates remained faithful to the king, but

¹ James III. only survived two years, being murdered in June, 1488, in Scotland, after a rebellion. But Henry ratified the truce anew with James IV., who succeeded his father on the throne, and peace was preserved between the two nations for an unusually long period.

a great number of persons supported the pretensions of this adventurer, and he was proclaimed as Edward VI., King of England and Lord of Ireland. When this extraordinary imposture was made known at the English Court, Henry ordered that the real Edward Plantagenet should be shown to the people at St. Paul's, and at Richmond Palace, and allowed the courtiers to converse with him freely. A proclamation was issued offering pardon to all who would submit before a certain day, not even excepting those guilty of high treason, which Lord Bacon pronounces to have been 'a determination of the highest prudence.' Henry, as he says, was aware that 'a king is in danger from his subjects, when most of his subjects feel that they are in danger from him.'¹ Those in England who saw the real prince ridiculed the imposture, but the Irish persisted in supporting the pretended fugitive.

The favourable reception of Simnel in Ireland encouraged another aspirant. When Richard III. lost his only son, he named the Earl of Lincoln, son of his sister, his heir. At Henry's accession Lincoln contrived to gain his confidence and was allowed to converse with Edward Plantagenet. He soon departed to the court of his aunt, the Duchess of Burgundy, an ardent Yorkist, where he met and conspired with Lord Lovell. With the aid of two thousand veterans, commanded by Martin Swartz, an experienced officer, Lincoln sailed to Dublin to support the counterfeit Warwick, and advised his coronation, at which the Bishop of Meath officiated, employing a diadem taken from a statue of the Virgin Mary. The crowned impostor was carried from the church to the castle, according to the old Irish usage, on the shoulders of an English chieftain. Writs were issued in the name of Edward VI., and a Parliament was summoned to meet at Dublin.

On hearing of Lincoln's treason, Henry proceeded through the eastern counties, where the earl's influence chiefly prevailed, and then joined his mother and the queen, who were residing at Kenilworth Castle. Momentous news soon arrived; Lord Lincoln had landed in North Lancashire with German and Irish forces, had been joined by the tenants of Sir John Broughton, and was crossing Yorkshire. The king's friends lost no time in mustering their retainers, and the two armies approached Newark. The country between Nottingham and Newark must have been wild and pathless, as it is related that the royal troops lost their way and proceeded with the help of

¹ Bacon's 'H'

'VII.,' pp. 14, 33.

five guides.¹ Meantime Lincoln's efforts to awaken enthusiasm by proclaiming Edward VI. were of little avail. The real friends of the House of York were either distrustful or afraid; but still the earl pressed forward, hoping to find the king unprepared for an attack. At the head of eight thousand men he encountered part of the king's army at Stoke, near Newark, where he was totally defeated and lost his life in the engagement. Lord Lovell is supposed to have perished on his flight from the field, as he was never seen again, and several other leaders were slain. Lambert Simnel, the impostor, and the priest who was his director, were taken prisoners. Under ordinary tyrants they would have suffered torture, or at least death on the scaffold. But Henry regarded Simnel merely as the instrument of others; he degraded him to turn the spit in the royal kitchen, and some time afterwards allowed him, as a reward for good conduct, the more honourable position of falconer. The guilty priest was sent to prison and was heard of no more.

To silence complaints that he treated the queen with little respect, Henry gave directions for her coronation and settled on her an ample provision. After this Elizabeth was seen in public more frequently, and appeared to enjoy the dignity befitting her position. Parliament passed a bill of attainder, which included nearly every man of property who had been engaged in the late insurrection.

It was found expedient to restrain by law the dangerous custom of 'maintenance,' the usage by which noblemen maintained a large number of men who wore their livery and supported their cause in quarrels. Offenders had escaped from judgment, the course of justice had been frequently interrupted by these armed retainers, and powerful noblemen were thus enabled to raise forces against the government. The preceding Parliament had required the Lords to pledge themselves not to retain in their service murderers, felons, or outlaws, or to oppose the due execution of the king's writs. The chief justice stated that the Lords had made similar promises under Edward IV., and yet that several of them, within an hour, and even in the king's presence, enlisted retainers to support their quarrels, and consequently to set aside the execution of the law.² The civil war between the Houses of York and Lancaster had greatly reduced the number of the nobility. In 1451, Henry VI. summoned fifty-three peers to Parliament; in 1485, Henry VII.

¹ Lingard, v. 289.

² Lingard, v. 292, note.

only summoned twenty-nine, several of whom had been lately raised to that rank. It was consequently the more easy for the king to restrain that power which, notwithstanding occasional interference with justice, had in former years done England good service by checking the pretensions of the crown.¹

The ascendancy of the great English barons was past; that of the House of Commons was yet to come. In order to restrain combinations, Henry set up a court consisting of the chancellor, treasurer, keeper of the privy seal, a bishop, and a few others, who were empowered to summon before them any persons accused of employing armed retainers, or of instigating a breach of the public peace. The decorations of the room in which this tribunal was held gave it the name of the Court of Star Chamber. Its authority was soon extended beyond its first limits, over those accused of libels and misdemeanours; and, being exercised with severity, became the most important grievance of the Tudor dynasty. So difficult was it, before public opinion was represented by an intelligent Parliament, adequately to protect the laws without sanctioning oppression.²

Public attention was at this time directed to the dukedom of Brittany, the only French province which retained its own duke and its ancient constitution. Duke Francis was declining in health and had no son. Maximilian, son of the Emperor of Germany, was the favoured suitor of Anne, the youthful heiress; but his pretensions were opposed by Charles VIII., King of France, who desired to annex Brittany to his own dominions. Both the king and the duke appealed to the King of England. Charles reminded Henry of the aid which he received from French soldiers at the battle of Bosworth; the duke appealed to his gratitude on account of the asylum which he found in Brittany during his exile.

The English Parliament urged the duke's claims, and readily granted supplies, which Henry was gracious enough to accept without any interest in that cause. In the autumn of 1488, when Duke Francis died, the young princess was left without protection, and very soon half Brittany was in the hands of the French. General excitement in England roused

¹ Lord Macaulay, i. 39. Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 296.

² The jurisdiction of the king's council, from which that of the Star Chamber was derived, is discussed in Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' chap. viii. Complaints were repeatedly made by Parliament of the coercive authority thus exercised, and 'the patriots of those times never ceased to lift their voices' when men were dragged before this tribunal without a trial by their peers (ii. 271).

Henry from apathy. He sent envoys to Spain, Germany, and France, and offered the orphan princess the support of an English army. He summoned Parliament and demanded an aid of a hundred thousand pounds for the maintenance of ten thousand archers for one year, but was obliged to agree to a reduction of one-fourth, the Lords for themselves, the Commons for themselves and their constituents, granting the king a tenth of the income of their lands and pensions, and a tax on personal property of one penny in eight.¹

Henry was the reverse of a chivalrous monarch. 'Like a good merchant,' says Lord Bacon, 'he trafficked with the martial spirit of his people to make his return in money.' English troops were, however, sent to Brittany, which stopped for a time the advance of the French.

In the North of England the people rebelled against the demand, declaring their inability to pay, and Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, endeavoured to obtain an abatement. But Henry refused easier terms for reputed Yorkists. His refusal cost Northumberland his life, for the incensed people, supposing that he promoted the extortion, broke into his castle and murdered him with several of his attendants.²

Sir John Egremont became for a short time the leader of these insurgents, but was defeated by the Earl of Surrey, and escaped to the court of the Duchess of Burgundy, the upholder of the Yorkist cause.

Although Anne of Brittany had been actually married by proxy to Maximilian, the King of France succeeded in breaking that compact and obtained her hand. She was persuaded that Brittany was a fief of the French crown, and that no heiress could enter on marriage without the consent of her lord. Anne still remained inflexible till a French army was brought to the gates of Rennes and she was required to choose whether to be the wife or the captive of the King of France. She yielded, was married to Charles, and in December, 1491, was crowned at St. Denis. The object of the war thus appeared to be at an end, but still Henry sought money towards the war expenses; he also received gratuities from his opponents abroad for favourable interposition.³ He even ventured to extort money from his subjects under the opprobrious term of a 'benevolence,' that exaction which Richard III. had abolished

¹ Lingard, v. 298.

² See Skelton's elegy on the death of the Earl of Northumberland, in Percy's 'Reliques of Ancient Poetry,' i. 92. The poet reproaches the earl's retainers that 'they fled from him for falsehood or fear.'

³ Bacon's History, p. 118.

in order to gain popularity. This fell chiefly on the traders, who were the principal holders of ready money, and London contributed largely. Archbishop Morton, the chancellor, is said to have directed the collectors to tell those who studied frugality that their parsimony must have made them rich; and those who lived handsomely that their expenditure proved their opulence. A 'piece of logic,' says Hallam, 'which was unanswerable, and acquired the name of Morton's fork.'¹

Henry expressed his resolution of chastising the perfidy of the King of France, and after many delays landed at Calais in October, 1492, and laid siege to Boulogne. Even, however, before he embarked, he was preparing for peace, and he soon afterwards submitted the draft of a treaty to the consideration of his principal officers. They alleged, as reasons against continuing the war, the lateness of the season, the ill-health of the troops, and the strength of the fortifications of Boulogne, besides, what no doubt weighed the most with the king, offers from Charles of a large sum to be paid in instalments. From Calais Henry wrote to the Mayor and Aldermen of London with exultation, 'knowing well,' says Lord Bacon, 'that a full exchequer is always good news in London.' The king's favourites who had been bribed by Charles, applauded their master's prudence and success; but his conduct was much condemned by the army, whose hopes he disappointed, and by noblemen and knights, who had been led into ruinous expenditure in vain.

It was about this time that Henry was informed by Ferdinand and Isabella, the sovereigns of Spain, of their success in rescuing the province of Granada from the Moors, by whom it had been ruled for more than seven hundred years. The city of Granada surrendered to the royal forces on January 2, 1492, and the event was considered of so much importance to all Europe that Henry ordered a public thanksgiving in St. Paul's cathedral, which was attended by all the principal nobles and clergy.² The name of Ferdinand became distinguished as the triumphant ruler of Spain, and soon afterwards he gave credentials to Columbus for the expedition which led to the discovery of America.

The Duchess of Burgundy, sister of Edward IV., now formed another plot against the King of England. Her nephew, the Earl of Lincoln, had been killed in the battle of Stoke; her nephew, the unfortunate Earl of Warwick, was pining in prison.

¹ 'Constitutional History,' i. 14.

² Bacon, p. 124. Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' i. 427.

She sought for another pretender to appear as a Plantagenet, and fixed upon Perkin Warbeck, the son of a converted Jew living at Tournay, as endowed with the requisite accomplishments for this task. He could speak English well and was prepossessing in appearance. The Duchess determined that this young man should personate that Richard Duke of York who was said to have been murdered by the order of Richard III., but concerning whose fate there was still a mystery. She acquainted him with many circumstances respecting the royal family of England, and instructed him how to fabricate a plausible story relating to his past life.

To prepare a favourable impression, a rumour was circulated that the agents who were commanded to put both the royal brothers to death had only destroyed the elder—called Edward V., and, being induced to save the life of the younger prince, had set him secretly at liberty.¹ In May, 1492, this adventurer appeared in Ireland, and a large party favoured his pretensions. By the invitation of the French ministers he went to Paris and placed himself under the protection of Charles VIII., taking the lead among the English outlaws there; but when peace was signed between France and England, Charles immediately ordered Warbeck to leave his dominions. On leaving France the adventurer was received by the Duchess of Burgundy, who designated him 'The White Rose of England.' Many asked whether it were possible for an aunt to be deceived as to the identity of her nephew. The English Yorkists sent Sir Robert Clifford to Flanders to hear the narrative of the youth's adventures from himself and the duchess, and he assured his employers that the claim of the Duke of York was indisputable. The King of England also sent agents to unravel the mystery and to furnish him with the names of the principal partisans concerned in the plot. Even the ministers of the Archduke of Burgundy are said to have been divided as to the genuineness of Warbeck's pretensions; and, in reply to Henry's expostulations, the Archduke Philip promised to withhold his own aid, but pleaded his inability to control the Duchess. Whereupon Henry, as a mark of displeasure, transferred the mart of English cloth from Antwerp to Calais, and strictly prohibited intercourse with the Netherlands.

In January, 1495, Henry conceived some suspicion of Sir William Stanley, his lord chamberlain, who had appeared

¹ Lord Bacon mentions this 'flying opinion,' p. 135.

on the field of Bosworth as one of his most loyal adherents. The charge was brought by Clifford to obtain his own pardon for being concerned in the conspiracy; but Stanley confessed the truth of the accusation, and, on the strength of his own confession, he was arraigned and brought to execution. It was reported that he had supplied the pretender with money; others repeated his words—'Were I sure that this was the son of Edward, I would never fight against him.' Henry expressed great unwillingness to agree to the execution of a nobleman from whom he had received such valuable assistance, and who was the brother of his mother's husband—Lord Stanley; but the king's avarice raised the suspicion that he was not reluctant to obtain the large wealth which devolved to the crown by his death.¹ As attempts to restore the Yorkist dynasty had been so favourably received in Ireland, Henry considered it prudent to take measures for the better order of the sister island. According to Hall, the contemporary chronicler, there were then in Ireland 'two kinds of men,' the civil, with whom the English merchants had intercourse, who had learnt to speak the English language, and obeyed the English laws; and 'another kind, clean contrary to this—wild, foolish, fierce, and, for their rude fashions, called savage Irishmen,' who were in continual war. Henry named his infant son Henry, governor of Ireland, and appointed Sir Edward Poynings his deputy. Poynings' administration was vigorous. He arrested the Earl of Kildare, who had supported the pretender, and summoned a Parliament. He was unable to exercise immediate authority over 'the wild Irish,' but he restrained those who resided within 'the Pale;' and by enacting that the King of England must be consulted prior to the meeting of Parliament in Ireland, and that all intended measures should first obtain official approval, he put a check upon those powerful Irish nobles 'whom it was dangerous not to employ and still more dangerous to trust.'² The deputy passed an act of attainder against the Earl of Kildare and his family, but Henry accepted the earl's apology and reversed the attainder.

Three years had passed since the pretender first set forth his claim without any attempt being made to enforce it either by law or the sword. The accounts which had been disseminated

¹ Sir William's income was estimated at £3,000 per annum—'a very large income in those days.'—Bacon, 160.

² Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' ii. 523. Poynings' Act limiting the power of the Irish Parliament has been frequently referred to in later times.

concerning his origin and the punishment of his chief abettors, made his cause desperate, and the archduke and merchants of Flanders were weary of the guest of the Duchess Margaret, on whose account commerce with England was interrupted.

In July, 1495, Warbeck sailed from the Flemish coast with a few hundred adventurers, and made a descent near Deal. But the inhabitants attacked his forces, made more than a hundred prisoners, and drove the rest to their boats. By Henry's orders all the prisoners were hanged, and Warbeck returned to Flanders in despair. The archduke soon afterwards entered into a treaty of commerce with England, in which Henry expressly forbade that either government should assist the enemies of the other. Warbeck, unable to remain longer in Flanders, sailed to Cork; but the Irish refused their aid. From Cork he passed into Scotland, bringing, it is said, letters of recommendation from the King of France and the Duchess of Burgundy. James IV. received him with rash enthusiasm, allowed him the dignity of a Duke of York, and proved his friendship by bestowing on him in marriage his own near relation, Lady Catherine Gordon. About 1,400 men, outlaws from all nations, were under Warbeck's orders, to which James added all the forces he could raise, and in the middle of winter the combined army crossed the border, preceded by a proclamation in which the pretender styled himself 'Richard IV. King of England' in the usual form, and described his escape from the Tower. He called on every true Englishman to support him, and offered a large reward for the apprehension of the king, 'Henry Tudor—the Usurper.' The proclamation had no effect in England. Not a sword was unsheathed, and the Scots returned home after pillaging the country, as was their custom.

When Henry heard of the invasion he ordered a levy of troops and summoned Parliament, which granted a supply. In general there was no opposition to the demand; but the men of Cornwall resisted. They were a hardy race, chiefly miners, and thought it hard to be taxed because the Scots invaded the border; especially they demanded the punishment of Archbishop Morton, who was supposed to be the royal adviser. Lord Audley, a popular but turbulent nobleman, took the lead of the Cornish insurgents, and they advanced as far as Kent, which some of them ignorantly thought must be favourable to any attempt against oppression, because Kent was said to have never been conquered. An engagement took place at Blackheath, where the king's troops defeated the rebels with

great loss; but the long arrows used by the Cornish men proved their strength of arm.¹ Lord Audley was beheaded, two other leaders were hanged, the survivors of less degree were pardoned. A truce was arranged between England and Scotland. Still Warbeck hoped for success in the West of England, and in September unfurled the standard of Richard IV. at Bodmin, where, in spite of the late defeat, three thousand Cornishmen offered their services. That number was doubled before he reached Exeter. He failed in his attempt against that city, and proceeded to Taunton, where, at sight of the royal army which was approaching, Warbeck's courage failed, and at midnight he fled with sixty followers to the sanctuary of Beaulieu, in Hampshire, leaving his troops no alternative but submission. When Henry arrived at Exeter, the insurgents were led before him with halters round their necks, and were discharged after an admonition. The ringleaders were hanged, and the inhabitants of the villages where Warbeck had received aid or refreshment were fined. Lady Catherine Gordon, the deceived wife of the pretender, who had been left at St. Michael's Mount, burst into tears when admitted to Henry's presence; but he relieved her by kind words, and received her into the queen's service. Lady Catherine retained at court the name of the White Rose, which suited both her beauty and the position into which she had been betrayed. The sanctuary of Beaulieu was guarded by soldiers, till at last Warbeck threw himself on the king's mercy. He rode in the royal suite to London, multitudes gazing on him with great curiosity. After such treasonable attempts, it might have been expected that the pretender would have been sent to immediate trial and execution; but after repeated examinations he remained in custody at the royal palace for six months. He then contrived to escape, but the approaches to the coast were so strictly watched that he surrendered in despair to the prior of Richmond monastery, who interceded for him with the king. By Henry's orders he was compelled to stand in the stocks at Westminster Hall and Cheapside, and to read a public confession, after which he was sent to the Tower, and became intimate with the Earl of Warwick, the real heir of the Plantagenets. Unhappily for Warwick, he was imprudent enough to promise that, if they could both procure their freedom, he would abet Warbeck's pretensions and support him with the retainers of his house. The plan was discovered; Warbeck, whose treason was indis-

¹ Bacon states that about 300 royalists were killed, mostly by arrows the length of a tailor's yard (p. 197.)

putable, repeated his confession of guilt, and was executed. The Earl of Warwick was arraigned at the bar of the House of Lords and pleaded guilty. After confinement in prison for fifteen years, it was natural that he should catch at any proposal of deliverance, and his case might have been met with lenity by a king who was not generally cruel. But Henry signed the warrant for his execution. The fate of this unfortunate descendant of the Plantagenet kings was lamented by the whole nation.

The last ten years of this reign were undisturbed by insurrection, and Henry was chiefly occupied with forming treaties of peace and amassing money. Scotland had been continually impoverished during many years by harassing warfare with England. Its trade was neglected, and farmers were obliged to wear armour and attend the summons of the nobles, leaving old men, women, and children to work in the fields. Happily for Scotland, her Parliament in 1494 passed a memorable Act ordaining that all persons holding any landed property should send their sons to the nearest school for instruction in Latin and other learning. The Scottish nobility had been previously reproached for their neglect of education, and 'we cannot doubt,' says Sir Walter Scott, 'the good influence of this singular statute.'

Henry, when anxious to detach the King of Scots from the Yorkist conspiracy, had offered him the hand of his eldest daughter. Subsequently James asked for the favour which he had before rejected, and the proposal was joyfully accepted by Henry. When some of the council intimated a fear lest, in case of a failure of the male line, England should in future time become an appendage to the crown of Scotland, the politic King of England replied, 'No; Scotland will become an appendage to the English crown, for the smaller kingdom must follow the larger.' The marriage then arranged was to the lasting benefit of both countries.

When the contract was formed, the princess was only twelve years of age, and it was not till July, 1503, that Margaret left home for Scotland, riding through the northern counties on a palfrey, but making her entry into the towns in a magnificent litter drawn by two horses, accompanied by noblemen and ladies. At the border she was received by the Scottish nobility, and was met near Edinburgh by King James, who 'mounted her palfrey and rode with her behind him into his capital.' The marriage was performed by the Archbishop of Glasgow, and there was a profuse display of costly apparel on the part of both the Scot-

tish and English noblemen, although the English complained in some measure of the rough manners of the Scots.¹ The splendour exhibited by the Earl of Northumberland, at least as regarded 'the riches of his coat, garnished with precious stones,' was thought more to befit a prince than a subject.

A marriage had been arranged some years before this time between Prince Arthur, Henry's eldest son, and Catherine, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. The prince was still a boy of fifteen when, in the autumn of 1501, Catherine landed in England, and the marriage was solemnised at St. Paul's. Henry showed his satisfaction at this event by sumptuous banquets, and the nobility made a display of magnificence which was in some cases ruinous to them. Ludlow Castle, in Shropshire, was the residence assigned to the young couple; but their hopes of future happiness were soon blighted. Arthur, who was much esteemed for his promise of excellence, died in the spring which followed his marriage. Ferdinand and Isabella wished to perpetuate their alliance with England, and proposed that their daughter should remain, in expectation of becoming the bride of the next heir-apparent, Prince Henry. Unless their daughter should have the prospect of being the future queen, her portion of 100,000 crowns 'must be restored. Henry agreed to the proposal; after some delay the Pope granted a dispensation for the marriage, and Catherine was affianced to Prince Henry. Ferdinand's tardiness in completing the payment of her portion, of which only a part had been forthcoming, delayed the marriage for several years. It is said that Catherine expressed to her father that she felt but little inclination for the second marriage in England, but that she was willing to keep her own wishes out of view.²

Suspicion was again excited by the conduct of a Yorkist nobleman. Edmund, brother of the Earl of Lincoln who fell in battle at Stoke, claimed the dukedom of Suffolk on the death of his father. Henry granted him the title of Earl, but allowed him only a small part of the inheritance. At Prince Arthur's marriage, Suffolk rivalled the richest nobles in the elegance of his display, but was soon afterwards involved in danger by his impetuosity. He killed a man who had offended him, and received the royal pardon for the crime, but fled subsequently to the court of his aunt, the Duchess of Burgundy, who was so determined an enemy of the king that all who took refuge with her were suspected of disloyalty towards his government. Henry

¹ Hall's Chronicle, p. 498; Lingard, v. 325.

² Lingard, v. 333. note.

employed a spy, and in consequence the earl's brother and several other persons were apprehended. Sir James Tyrrell, whose life was at this time forfeit, confessed that he had been concerned in the murder of Edward V. and his brother.¹ On the death of Isabella, Queen of Spain, her separate kingdom of Castile was inherited by her daughter, Joanna, wife of the Archduke Philip. In the winter of 1506 these royal personages, when on their way to Spain by sea, were distressed by adverse weather, and took shelter at Weymouth. Henry no sooner heard of the landing of the King and Queen of Castile, as they were styled, than he resolved to extract some advantage from the occurrence. He invited them to his court in terms which made refusal scarcely possible, and detained them for three months in a kind of honourable captivity. Plans for future marriages were discussed; even Henry himself, then a widower, was inclined to marry the Duchess of Savoy, Philip's sister, provided she would bring him a large portion. Another stipulation was more disgraceful. The recent death of the Duchess of Burgundy had brought the Earl of Suffolk to poverty, and he had accepted Philip's hospitality in Flanders. Henry asked for his surrender; Philip pleaded for awhile that his honour forbade him to give up his guest, but he was himself in captivity and yielded, requiring Henry's promise that he would not take the life of Suffolk. Messengers were sent to recall the earl to England; he trusted to 'gentle words,' and came, 'assured of his life, and hoping for his liberty.' But the Tower was assigned him as his home. Well assured that his promise of mercy did not extend beyond his own lifetime, Henry directed his son to see to Suffolk's execution, a commission which Henry VIII. accomplished a few years later without any additional pretext.²

Henry's principal agents in exacting money were two lawyers, Sir Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley, Barons of the Exchequer, who took every opportunity of collecting fines, of which no small portion found its way to their own coffers. They revived feudal claims, exacted payment of arrears, and punished offenders without trial or by juries summoned in their own interest. The trial of a person accused was sometimes removed to a distant shire, and in case he could not appear, he was summarily outlawed and his property forfeited. Against such abuses men murmured, and even the clergy openly preached at St. Paul's Cross, without redress.³

¹ Lingard, v. 332, note.

² Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' i. 26.

³ Hall's Chronicle, p. 502.

An instance is related by Lord Bacon showing the king's severity towards a nobleman who had been one of the most faithful of his adherents. Henry was once sumptuously entertained by the Earl of Oxford at Henningham Castle. When preparing to depart, the king observed a large body of men arrayed in the earl's livery, and asked the earl, whom he had just thanked for his hospitality, whether all these were his menial servants. Oxford replied with a smile that his fortune was not sufficient for the charge of so large a household, but that the chief part of those persons were retainers, who came on this occasion to do service, and to have the pleasure of seeing their sovereign. Henry was not tempted by this proof of loyalty to overlook the opportunity of exacting a fine, and told the earl that his attorney must speak to him respecting this breach of the law lately enforced against the maintenance of retainers. Oxford was condemned to pay 'a fine of ten thousand pounds,' an almost incredible sum, considering the value of money at that time.¹

The king's severity produced general obsequiousness to his will, and the large revenues which he acquired made him in the latter part of his reign so independent of Parliament that during thirteen years he only once summoned that assembly. This took place in 1504, in order to obtain an equivalent for the feudal grant usually made when the king's eldest son was knighted or his daughter disposed of in marriage. On that occasion, Sir Thomas More, the son of a justice of the King's Bench, a young member, ventured to object to the demand. Henry was highly indignant at finding that 'a beardless boy' had opposed his will, and wished to punish him. As young More, 'nothing having, could nothing lose,' the king brought a charge against his father, and sent him to imprisonment in the Tower until he paid a fine of a hundred pounds. Henry's displeasure against the bold young commoner was indeed so apparent that More determined to leave the country, from fear that, 'being in the king's indignation,' he could not remain in England without danger; but he changed his resolution on Henry's death.²

¹ Bacon says 15,000 marks. It appears from a passage in the 'Paston Letters' (ii. 23), 'that it was considered,' in the reign of Richard II., 'as a mark of respect to the king when he came into a county, for the noblemen and gentlemen to meet him with as many attendants in livery as they could muster.' The Duke of Norfolk provided on one occasion two hundred. 'This,' says Hallam, 'illustrates the well-known story of Henry VII. and the Earl of Oxford, and shows the mean and oppressive conduct of the king in that affair.'—'Middle Ages,' ii. 296, note.

² See Roper's 'Life of More,' quoted by Sir James Mackintosh, in vol. i. of 'Eminent British Statesmen.'

Several of the most respectable citizens of London were heavily fined by the king's rapacious agents, and thrown into prison on default of payment. Sir William Capel, an alderman, who was mulcted at £2,700, compounded for £1,600; 'and yet after this,' says Bacon, 'Empson would have squeezed him again, had not the king died in the instant.' Henry expired in April, 1509. He left three children—Henry, who inherited the crown; Margaret, the wife of James IV. of Scotland; and Mary, who afterwards married Louis XII. of France.

The twenty-four years of this reign were chiefly peaceful, and peace brought prosperity to England. It is said that Henry occasionally advanced large sums to merchants who were engaged in profitable trade. He encouraged the enterprise of Sebastian Cabot, who discovered Newfoundland and the north of America, and fitted out a vessel to join in the expedition. The first large ship in the English navy, called 'The Great Harry,' is reported to have been built by the king's orders, and to have cost £14,000. With the Pope's concurrence, the abuse of sanctuaries was restrained, and a person who, after availing himself of that refuge, became again an offender, was debarred from the privilege in future.

In his last will Henry attempted to make some reparation for past injustice, but was not softened towards the unfortunate Earl of Suffolk, whom he left in prison. He was interred in Westminster Abbey, where the chapel which he had erected perpetuates his fame.

To show the state of society at this period, Hume makes extracts from a household book of the Earl of Northumberland. The inmates of the castle were 156 in number, besides the usual daily reception of fifty strangers, and the cost of their maintenance was considered to be $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ a day for each, equivalent to $14d.$ about the middle of last century. Fresh meat was only provided during the summer; at other seasons the tables were furnished with salted provisions, poultry and pork being luxuries confined to the earl's table. Linen was scarce, and the beds were without sheets. The use of coals was limited, and no fires were allowed from Lady Day to winter, excepting in the rooms of the noble family.

The earl had three country seats in Yorkshire, but had only furniture for one, so that his beds and other comforts were removed from place to place in several carts. The earl and countess breakfasted at seven on meat or salt fish with beer or wine, dined at ten, and supped at four o'clock.

'It is amusing,' says Hume, 'to observe the pompous and

even royal style assumed by this Tartar chief.' Sumptuous as was the display of apparel on great occasions, the common mode of life was deemed barbarous by Italian visitors to England, who were accustomed in their own country to far greater elegance, and to a highly advanced stage of literature and art.¹

¹ See note in Hume's 'History,' written about the middle of the last century.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HENRY VIII.

A.D. 1509—1547.

THE change from the reign of Henry VII., who had forfeited his subjects' affection through his covetous and suspicious disposition, to that of the handsome and popular young prince, was hailed by the English nation with delight. Henry VIII. had nearly completed his eighteenth year, he excelled in all the exercises of the tournament, and appeared to possess every princely quality. His education had been so well directed that he could speak and write in four languages; he was acquainted in some degree with both medicine and mechanics; and the extent of his theological learning led to a report that, before his brother Arthur's death, he had been designed to become Archbishop of Canterbury.

Immediately after his accession, Henry announced his intention of marrying the Princess Catherine, who had been for three months his brother's wife. She was three years older than Arthur; nearly eight years older than Henry.

The marriage was followed by the coronation of the king and queen, celebrated with much gorgeous parade. According to the usual custom, the royal pair took up their abode previously for a short time in the Tower, and went on the day before the coronation to Westminster in grand procession, the king on horseback, the queen in a litter drawn by white pal-freys, the streets being hung with rich tapestry, and every guild and profession fully represented.

Henry was arrayed in a robe of crimson velvet furred with ermine, a coat of raised gold adorned with precious stones, and a costly chain. The separate dominions to which, according to the heralds, he might lay claim, were personated by 'nine children of honour' on horseback, bearing the names of England,

France, Gascony, Guienne, Normandy, Anjou, Cornwall, Wales, and Ireland.

The rapacity of the government during the last reign had aroused such general discontent that it was prudent to take measures for immediate conciliation; and even before the funeral of the late king had been solemnised, the prosecution of Empson and Dudley, the detested agents of royal extortion, had begun. They were charged with having usurped the authority of the courts of law, with having extorted extraordinary fines, and in various ways sold justice or inflicted wrong. The prisoners urged in their defence that, although their conduct might have been contrary to strict law, it had been justified by precedent and by the king's commission. To hush the clamour of the people, 'seldom unwilling to see bad methods employed in punishing bad men,'¹ Empson and Dudley were falsely and absurdly accused of a design to secure the king's person on the death of his father, and to take on themselves the powers of government. It seems to have been admitted during this reign, says Lingard, that if the crown brought an individual to his trial it mattered little by what device his conviction was procured.² The charge devised against Dudley and Empson was conspiracy against the state, and there was no difficulty in securing their conviction.

Henry, satisfied with the forfeiture of their property, might have allowed them to languish in prison for the remainder of their lives; but when, on a progress through the country a year after their arrest, he found the people discontented with the delay of their punishment, he sent orders for their immediate execution. They suffered accordingly on Tower Hill on August 18, 1510; their blood satisfied the people, but, the popular discontent once appeased, the officers of the Treasury cared little to redress the wrongs of the administration. During the two following years the king's attention appears to have been chiefly engrossed by out-door amusements and revels. The queen and her ladies, the foreign ambassadors, and the English nobles, were continually summoned to behold the king fight with the two-handed sword or battle-axe; and so skilful was Henry, or so prudent were his opponents, that the prize invariably fell to his lot. 'On May-day in the second year of his reign,' says Hall, 'his Grace being young, and willing not to be idle, rose in the morning very early to fetch May or green boughs, himself richly apparelled, and all his knights, squires, and gentlemen in

¹ Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' p. 16.

² Lingard, vi. 4.

white satin, and all his guard and yeomen of the crown in white sarcenet. And so went every man with his bow and arrows shooting in the wood, and returned to the court every man with his green bough in his cap.' At the feast of Pentecost, which he kept at Greenwich, Henry challenged all comers, being gentlemen, to contend 'with him and his friends at the barriers, both at the target and with casting a spear eight feet long.' In all which difficult feats, although many strong and valiant persons took part, 'the praise was given to his Grace.' At Windsor Castle the king pursued similar amusements, playing also on the flute and other musical instruments, and composing ballets and masses.

About two years after Henry's accession, the Pope Julius II., whose dominions had been invaded by the French king, Louis XII., invited all Christian princes to join with him in a 'holy league,' by which he hoped to extend the papal dominions and to free Italy from a foreign yoke. Henry with his father-in-law, Ferdinand of Spain, and the Emperor of Germany, willingly entered into the 'League of Cambray' nominally 'for the extinction of schism and the defence of the Roman Church.'¹ He was gratified by the Pope's promise to reward his services by the title of 'most Christian King,' which Louis had forfeited; and he flattered himself that he might recover some of those French provinces which had been attached to the English crown, and thus make the proud boast of his coronation day as to Anjou and Guienne somewhat more of a reality. Louis was soon compelled to abandon Milan, and before Christmas, 1512, Pope Julius announced that he had freed Italy, and 'had chased away the barbarians,' whose homes were beyond the Alps. But this martial pontiff died in February, 1513, and the new Pope, one of the Medici of Florence, afterwards so well known as Leo X., rendered but feeble aid towards the war with France. The mock contests in which Henry had at present taken part by no means satisfied his ambition, and he was eager to invade France in alliance with the Emperor of Germany. The English approved of their king's martial disposition, and were ready to pay their shares towards a subsidy apportioned to their means. A duke was assessed at £6 13s. 4d. Persons whose incomes were only one or two pounds paid 6d.; and 4d. was exacted from a still poorer class. None, as it was said, were

¹ Hall's Chronicle, p. 515.

² Cambray was at that time a bishopric annexed to the German Empire, and was not under French rule till the time of Louis XIV.

so poor that they could not contribute the value of a day's labour.¹

During his absence the king left the country under the government of his 'most dear consort, Queen Catherine,' and ordered the immediate execution of the unfortunate Earl of Suffolk, whose life Henry VII. had spared in compliance with the petition of the Archduke Philip, but whose execution he had advised his successor not to neglect. The conduct of the earl's brother, Richard de la Pole, who had taken high command in the French army, sealed the earl's fate.

After loitering for some weeks in Calais, the king joined his army before Terouenne. Hither also came the German Emperor, who called himself the King of England's volunteer, and wore the Red Rose of Lancaster for his badge, condescending to receive the daily pay of 100 crowns. In the battle which was soon followed by the surrender of the city, the French forces were, through some inexplicable turn of fortune, so quickly routed that Frenchmen themselves gave to the engagement the name of 'the Battle of the Spurs,' and several French noblemen of great bravery were taken prisoners. A few days after this encounter, a far more important battle was fought between the English and Scottish forces in the Cheviot Hills. In hopes of securing a durable peace, Henry VII. had bestowed his daughter Margaret in marriage on James IV. of Scotland. But the alliances of habitual policy between Scotland and France, as also the hereditary animosity of the Scottish people, were not so soon to be overthrown.

As soon as Henry joined the league against France, Louis XII. applied to James of Scotland for aid, the French queen naming him her knight and honouring him with a ring from her own finger. James responded by despatching 3,000 men to the aid of France, at the same time warning Henry, whilst encamped before Terouenne, that the late king's legacy to Queen Margaret was still unjustly detained. Without even waiting for the herald's return, James invaded the English border with a large but ill-trained army.

Queen Catherine ordered an immediate muster of the English forces; while the Earl of Surrey, who was at Pontefract Castle, summoned the gentlemen of the northern counties to join him at Newcastle, and offered battle to James on an early

¹ Lingard's 'History of England,' vi. 14, note. It may be remarked here, that in England the heaviest tax fell upon the nobles, in France upon the poor; indeed, the great grievance before the Revolution was that the pressure of taxation fell on the third estate

day. The position of the Scots on Flodden, the last of the Cheviot mountains, was so inaccessible that the earl, when he approached them on September 9, was even in doubt whether he should commence the attack; but the Scots descended the hill and the fight began. The right wing of the English vanguard was broken, and for some time the contest was arduous and doubtful; while James fought on foot, surrounded by some thousands of chosen warriors, animated by the presence of their monarch. At length victory inclined to the side of the English, resulting in the total rout of the Scottish army, and the queen wrote in triumph to her husband that King James had fallen near his banner, and that 10,000 Scots, among whom were lords, bishops, and even the young Archbishop of St. Andrew's, were slain around their king. Catherine added her intention to go immediately in pilgrimage to the shrine of the Virgin at Walsingham, to give thanks for this signal victory, and offer her prayers for Henry's safe return.¹ The body of King James was carried to London for honourable interment; but his death was for some time discredited amongst the Scottish people, among whom it was rumoured that he might have gone on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The widow, Queen Margaret, assumed the regency as guardian of her infant son James V., but after a few months she displeased the nation as well as her royal brother the King of England by contracting a marriage with the young Earl of Angus. The King of France earnestly wished for peace, and, having become a widower at the age of fifty-three, asked Henry for the hand of his sister, the Princess Mary. Mary, who was but sixteen, had approved the addresses of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, but she yielded to her brother's wishes, and the marriage was celebrated in France with much rejoicing.

After a union of three months only, the death of Louis gave the young widow the power of making another choice, and she ventured to inform Henry that she desired to marry her former suitor, the Duke of Suffolk. Her confidential adviser was Wolsey, who had risen rapidly in the royal favour, had been lately appointed Archbishop of York, and soon afterwards became Lord Chancellor.

During the succeeding eighteen years, Wolsey presided at the king's council and held the chief direction of public affairs.

¹ The faith in the sanctity of St. Mary's shrine at Walsingham, in Norfolk, at that time equalled that felt for St. Thomas-a-Becket at Canterbury. See 'Oxford Reformers of 1498,' p. 198. Twenty-five years later this far-famed image of the Virgin was publicly burned at Chelsea by the royal order.

The great number of letters which still remain, all written by, or directed to Henry, show that the king took much interest in the government, but Wolsey exercised great skill in guiding his decisions.

The Pope created Wolsey a cardinal, and in November, 1516, the cardinal's hat was met on its way at Blackheath by a great number of the clergy and others, who by Wolsey's order conducted the precious symbol in state to London. The Turkish emperor, who had overcome Egypt and Syria, now threatened Europe, and Leo X. induced the Kings of England, France, and Spain, and the Emperor of Germany, to join in a league for mutual protection against the common enemy of Christendom. The Pope sent Cardinal Campeggio to England to collect a tithe from the English clergy for this purpose, allowing Wolsey a share in the commission, and the two cardinals appeared in public in equal state. After Campeggio's departure, Wolsey was empowered by the Pope to act as his legate, and he set up a court in which he exercised jurisdiction over the clergy on the plea of reforming abuses. In the general discharge of his duty as chancellor, Wolsey is said to have shown impartial justice and great diligence. He endeavoured to protect the poor from oppression, and 'through his vigilance the highways became as safe,' says Erasmus, 'from harmful men as they had been before from noxious beasts.'¹

The learned Erasmus, who spent much time in England in the earlier part of this reign, gave high praise to Henry for his delight in the conversation of prudent and learned men, 'especially of those who did not know how to speak what they thought would please.' The time was still distant when he was to take upon himself the character of the persecutor.² Wolsey's interference with the minutiae of dress and every-day usage soon excited general irritation. Although unboundedly ambitious, he condescended to exact fines for the smallest breach of tyrannical laws, and sent commissioners into the country to regulate wages and even to control the hours of meals. A man was set in the pillory at Rochester for wearing a shirt of some cloth which had been forbidden; and Wolsey himself deprived an elderly man of the old crimson jacket which his rank did not entitle him to wear. Such 'extreme doing caused Wolsey to be greatly hated,' says Hall. Whilst

¹ Hall, the chronicler, who ridicules what he considered all this superfluous ceremony, praised Wolsey for his mode of administering justice.

² This praise, 'which appears to have been honestly bestowed,' was contained in the letter sent to the king by Erasmus, with a copy of 'The Christian Prince,' in 1517. — Seebohm's 'Oxford Reformers,' p. 356.

the lower classes were debarred from all finery, the clergy were encouraged to great magnificence by Wolsey's example. In spite of the prohibitory statute,¹ he held the revenues of several bishoprics and abbeys, and a contemporary writer ventured to satirise his conduct in a pretended dialogue between two priests' servants.²

'No man,' says Hall, 'durst reprove any thing in them (the clergy) for fear to be called *heretic*, and then they would make him smoke or bear a faggot.'

The cardinal's establishment was princely. Several hundred persons dined at his palace daily, and a company of young lords who were placed under his care for education, paying for their board and tuition, sat at a separate table in the great hall. Among these were the Earl of Derby and Lord Henry Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland. But whilst Wolsey enjoyed the greatest magnificence as a minister of state, he was aspiring to that highest station in the Church which would have raised him above the control of kings. He hoped on the next vacancy at Rome to be chosen Pope, and with this object he corresponded confidentially first with Francis I., King of France, and afterwards, more closely, with the young Emperor of Germany. The Pope was elected by the College of Cardinals, among whom the sovereigns of France and Spain had the greatest influence.

In the beginning of 1519, a new competition was opened to the aspiring monarchs of Europe by the death of the Emperor Maximilian, for the Emperor of Germany also was chosen by electors. Although Maximilian had already influenced the German princes in favour of his grandson Charles, King of Spain, Francis I. also came forward; and even Henry VIII. cast a wistful glance at the imperial throne of Germany. His envoy, however, soon found that his sovereign had no chance of success, and, according to Wolsey's secret instructions, threw the weight of his influence upon the side of Charles, who was at length unanimously chosen emperor, and now joined under

¹ The Statute of Provisors, passed in 1350.

² 'He hath a pair of costly shoes
Which seldom touch any ground,
They are so goodly and curious;
All of gold and stones precious,
Costing many a thousand pound.
Who did for the shoes pay?
Truly many a rich Abbaye
To be eased of his visitation.'

Dialogue by William Roy, Wood's 'Athenæ Oxonienses,' ii. 734.

his sway, with 'the throne of the Cæsars,' Spain and the rich provinces of the Netherlands. The contest had, however, awakened mutual distrust, wherefore each wished to cultivate the friendship of the King of England. Francis now reminded Henry that it had been agreed in their late treaty to hold a meeting on the borders of their respective dominions; and it was arranged by Wolsey that this should take place in May, near the town of Guisnes, which should be the scene of a grand tournament in honour of the occasion. Henry was indeed on the road thither and approaching Canterbury when he was informed of the sudden arrival of the young emperor to pay his respects to his royal 'uncle and aunt;' upon which the king halted three days in honour of his nephew's visit. During several weeks a thousand workmen had been employed to erect a wooden palace near Guisnes, including a chapel and state apartments for the accommodation of the King and Queen of England. The ceilings of the state-rooms were covered with silk, and the walls were hung with tapestry and cloth-of-gold. And as 'the town of Guisnes was little, and so all the noblemen might not there be lodged, tents were set up in the field to the number of eight hundred and twenty lodgings, which was a goodly sight,' says Hall.¹ A similar palace had been erected near the neighbouring town of Ardres for the King of France, and also a pavilion covered entirely with cloth-of-gold. A marriage was at this time in contemplation between the infant son of Francis and the little Princess Mary of England, and the King of France was most liberal in his offers in case of that union being effected. The two sovereigns publicly embraced, rode and walked together, and spent a fortnight either in the athletic games in which they personally took part, or in beholding the masques and disguisings which were the great diversions of the age. The queens beheld the combatants from the galleries, and the heralds daily registered the names and feats of the knights who had engaged. Both kings exhibited great splendour in their own persons and retinue, using the most lavish display of gold. Henry and Francis were both expert in their exercises, and likely to meet due consideration from those with whom they condescended to try their strength. They fought five battles on each day, and they invariably conquered in all five. Although such warm friendship subsisted between them, care was taken nevertheless to

¹ There were so many spectators from the neighbouring country, that both knights and ladies were obliged to rest themselves on straw, and be 'thereof well pleased,' says Hall.

guard against treachery by the constant attendance of an equal number of followers, till Francis at length resolved on an exhibition of more confidence, and, riding to Guisnes so early in the morning that Henry had not left his chamber, sportively called himself the prisoner of the King of England. Henry affected equal cordiality, but did not entirely lay aside his precautions. On the last day of the festivities, Francis was returning to Ardres when he met a troop of maskers, one of whom lowered his vizor, suddenly appearing as King Henry, and threw round his neck a collar of jewels, which Francis returned by presenting Henry with a costly bracelet. They then embraced and bade each other farewell.

‘The Field of the Cloth of Gold’ was the name given to the scene of these festivities. Henry now began to reckon the cost of the display of which he had been so lavish, and caused the cardinal to summon before him the English noblemen and gentry, bidding them send home half their servants, thanking them for their attendance, but enjoining them, ‘after their long charges, to live warily. This term warily was by most taken for *barely*, which saying the gentlemen sore disdained.’

Among the English nobles who accompanied their king to France, the highest in rank was Edward Duke of Buckingham, hereditary high constable of England, a descendant of Edward III., and the son of that Duke of Buckingham who, after he had assisted in placing Richard III. on the throne, was executed for taking part in an insurrection against him. The duke’s high birth exposed him to Henry’s jealous suspicions; it was said, moreover, that he nourished ambitious designs. In the spring following the tournaments at Guisnes, Buckingham, then residing at his estate in Gloucestershire, received a peremptory order to present himself at court. He obeyed, and was followed at a short distance by three knights who had been instructed to watch his movements. He called at Wolsey’s residence, but the cardinal refused to see him, and as he sailed down the river on his way to the court at Greenwich, he was arrested and taken to the Tower. He was shortly afterwards brought to trial at Westminster Hall before the Duke of Norfolk, the high steward, and seventeen other peers. The principal charge was that he had instigated Hopkins, the prior of the Charterhouse at Henton, to prophesy that he would be King of England. The witnesses brought against him were his own chaplain and esquire, and Hopkins himself, who, says Hall, ‘like a false hypocrite, had induced the duke to the treason, and had at divers times said that he should be King of England; but

the duke said that he had never consented to it.¹ He was also accused of attempting to corrupt some of the king's servants, and of having spoken disloyal words, and it was made to appear that his guilt amounted to 'imagining the king's death,' or high treason. The duke defended himself with eloquence, and required that the four witnesses should be confronted with him, which request was complied with.

The peers consulted in private, and when the prisoner was brought before them for judgment, the Duke of Norfolk informed him that he was found guilty, and pronounced the sentence of death with all its accompanying horrors. Buckingham, in a firm voice, declared that he was not guilty of treason, but that he had no ill-feeling towards his judges. Death by decapitation was substituted for the barbarous process enjoined by the law, and at the execution the tears of the spectators testified the general sympathy. It was generally reported that Buckingham's fall was the consequence of his not having paid the expected homage to Wolsey; but, small as the articles against him now appear, it has been maintained that he was condemned on evidence which, according 'to the tremendous latitude then allowed in cases of treason, a court of justice could not be expected to disregard.'²

War had meantime begun between Charles V. and the King of France, and both princes appealed to Henry as their ally. Henry conferred on Wolsey the high dignity of arbitrator of these differences, and the cardinal proceeded in great state to Bruges to have a personal interview with the emperor. After some politic pretence of his desire to effect a conciliation, the cardinal pronounced Francis to have been the aggressor, and that the King of England was bound to assist his imperial ally. A league was formed against France by the Pope, the Emperor, and the King of England. There was great joy in Italy, as Milan had just been rescued from the French. The Pope had returned to Rome in triumph, when he was seized with illness, and, after a few days, expired. Wolsey immediately used all his efforts to win the new election, and was promised the aid of Charles; but the emperor was probably instrumental in the choice of the Cardinal Adrian, a native of Utrecht, who had been his own preceptor.³ Adrian did not survive his elevation

¹ Hall, p. 623. See the speech of Buckingham in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.*, act ii. scene 1.

² Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' ii. 27.

³ Henry sent the Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Pace, to Rome to win the papacy for Wolsey. The king's 'very heart' was in his friend's favour, but Spanish gold and Spanish intrigue were too rapid for his diplomacy, and Adrian was already chosen when Pace arrived at Rome.—Dr. Milman's 'St. Paul's,' p. 183.

many months; and Wolsey was again dazzled by hopes of success, to be disappointed a third time, although Henry spared neither money nor expostulations in his favour. Giulio de' Medici was elected Pope under the name of Clement VII.

In the summer of 1522 Charles again visited England, and was entertained with great festivities.

Henry's great object was now to raise sufficient supplies to carry on the war, and to effect this, if possible, without calling together a Parliament. Wolsey, accordingly, sent commissioners into different counties to ascertain the annual rent of property in every township. Under the pretence of an apprehended invasion, all tenants were required to give their names and those of their landlords. A loan of £20,000 was exacted from the city of London; besides which the cardinal summoned the citizens before him, and required that every man whose property exceeded a hundred pounds should declare on oath the extent of his riches. The citizens remonstrating against this invasion of the secrecy so needful to men whose 'credit was often better than their substance,' the cardinal consented to receive their valuations in writing.¹

These methods of raising money were, however, insufficient, and it was found necessary to assemble Parliament, which Henry had not done for eight years. On their meeting, in April, 1523, Wolsey brought a royal message to show the necessity of an armament to prosecute war with France, estimating the expenses at £800,000, and proposing to raise that sum by a property tax of twenty per cent. The members, astonished at such an unprecedented demand, preserved an obstinate silence while the cardinal remained in the house, notwithstanding that he called on some of them by name. All the independent members resisted the demand, the debate was adjourned from day to day, and a deputation appointed to remonstrate with the cardinal on the impossibility of raising a subsidy; it was stated, indeed, to exceed the amount of coin then in circulation in the kingdom. Wolsey came again to the House of Commons, on pretence of reasoning with the members, more probably with the view of intimidation; but they refused to debate in his presence, saying that 'the fashion of the nether House was to hear, and not to reason, but among themselves.'

¹ 'Oh, my Lord,' said the alderman, 'it is not yet two months since the king had of the city £20,000 in ready money in loan, whereby the city is very bare of money. For God's sake, remember this, that rich merchants in war be bare of money.' . . . 'Great was the mourning of the common people, as it ever is in such cases of payments.'—Hall's Chronicle, p. 646.

They agreed to levy a tax of five per cent. on all kinds of property for two years, extending further under some restrictions; but Wolsey was much dissatisfied with their imperfect obedience, and sent commissioners through the country requiring that every man worth forty pounds should pay the whole tax before it became due. This was called 'an anticipation,' a term new to the commonalty; and 'all men cursed the cardinal and his adherents,' says Hall, 'as subverters of the laws and liberties of England. If men might thus be subject to give up their goods, then were it worse than the taxes of France, and so England would be bond and not free.'¹

Scotland was divided between the party of the Duke of Albany, supported by France, and that of the widowed Queen Margaret. The wretchedness inflicted on the people near the border by the inroads of Surrey, in reprisal of those of the Scots, appears from one of Wolsey's letters, detailing that 'no house, tree, cattle, corn, or other succour for man,' was left in Teesdale or March, and that the inhabitants who fled before the English were compelled to cross the frontier into England to beg their bread, and could by no threat of imprisonment, cutting off their ears, or branding, be kept away.²

While the King of France attempted conquest in Italy, Henry, in alliance with the Emperor of Germany, Charles V., sent the Duke of Suffolk to invade France. The English expedition proved a failure, owing to the intense frost after heavy rains, and it required all Wolsey's address to moderate Henry's displeasure against Suffolk, so ardently had he cherished the hope of obtaining the crown of France. It was equally improbable and undesirable that Henry should attain the object of his desire; but the crown for which he panted was apparently lost by the French king. Francis laid siege to the strong city of Pavia in October, 1524, and had entrenched his forces securely before its walls, when in an evil hour he was tempted to engage in battle with the imperial army. Wounded himself, and seeing the bravest of his nobles fall around him, he surrendered himself a prisoner to the Emperor of Germany. The victory of Pavia was announced in London with great exultation. A day of thanksgiving was appointed; the cardinal officiated at St. Paul's, and the king appeared in state. Henry was in haste to send an embassy to the emperor to offer every obstacle to the liberation of Francis, and to propose an invasion of France in concert with Charles. At Paris they might meet; he would

¹ Hall's Chronicle, pp. 672, 696; Hallam, i. 17.

² See extract of the cardinal's letter, Lingard, vi. 69, note.

then receive the crown of France as his lawful inheritance, and the emperor the provinces which he claimed as the heir of the house of Burgundy.

But if the King of England should bear the part which he proposed, much money would be requisite, and the produce of the last taxes had been already anticipated. Henry dreaded the resistance of another Parliament, and determined to raise money by the royal prerogative. A fourth part was required from the clergy, a sixth of every other man's substance, payable in money, plate, or jewels, according to the last valuation. The clergy resisted, and even preached against the exaction, alleging that the king could only take his subjects' goods in due course of law; and when Henry was informed of the popular feeling, he issued a proclamation stating that he fixed on no specific sum, but relied on the benevolence of his subjects. Exactions so worded had, however, been declared to be illegal, and the lord mayor assured the cardinal that he dared not enforce a demand which might cost him his life, and which, even if he and the aldermen assented to it, the common council would surely refuse. Citizens were encouraged to come privately to the cardinal and state what they would give, and the rich generally were forced to compound with the government.¹ In the country, in several counties, on the contrary, the working people were excited to rebel against these exactions. When, in Suffolk, the duke as commissioner had persuaded the rich clothiers to agree to pay a sixth, they in turn called together their spinners and others dependent on their trade, and declared their inability to give them employment, because they were deprived of their property. 'Then began the women and children to weep, and the men who had no work to rage.' Four thousand men were soon in arms, railing against the duke and the cardinal, and the duke found it difficult to get men to fight against their neighbours. The Duke of Norfolk, the high treasurer, came from Norfolk with his forces, and inquired the grounds of their complaint, upon which the people replied that they had no quarrel with the king, but that these exactions caused the clothworkers to discard their spinners and the husbandmen their servants. 'The king asketh so much that they give up household, and so of necessity we die wretchedly.' The duke, well knowing the reality of the grievance, then promised to intercede, and Henry remitted the obnoxious demands, 'for well it was perceived that the commons would never pay.'²

Apprised of the unpopularity which his arbitrary conduct

¹ Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' i. 19-21.

² Hall.

had provoked, Wolsey took credit to himself for having instigated the act of grace, and asked the people's prayers as their benefactor; 'but the people took this in mockery,' says Hall, 'and would hear no praise of one they so much hated.' 'If,' says Hallam, 'Wolsey could have promised the acquiescence of the nation under this yoke, there would probably have been an end of Parliaments for all ordinary purposes; but the courage and love of freedom natural to the English commons, speaking in the hoarse voice of tumult, though very ill supported by their superiors, preserved us in so great a peril.'¹

Whilst compelled, both by the sovereign and the people, to abstain from further exactions, Wolsey was still despotic. He sent for the lord mayor and other members of the corporation of London, received them with apparent courtesy, but required them to declare that they held their persons and goods at the royal will and pleasure; words resented by the common council when afterwards repeated to them. A gentleman of Huntingdonshire named Devereux, and John Scudder, of Kent, who had obstructed the late commissioners in their collection, were brought from the Tower through London, 'barefooted and in their shirts,' to the Star Chamber, where the cardinal reprimanded them 'with terrible words,' and then, in the king's name, pronounced their pardon. Wolsey showed especial favour to those of the Suffolk rebels who had been arrested, calling himself their countryman, offering to be bail for their good behaviour, and giving them money for their journey home. 'Now here,' says Hall, 'is an end of this commission, but not an end of inward grudge and hatred that the Commons bare to the cardinal and to all who had vehemently set forth their demand.' Even in his wiser enterprises Wolsey's arbitrary presumption offended many. Yet Wolsey and his sovereign alike promoted learning, and he showed his zeal for education by his patronage of St. Paul's school in London, the first seminary privately founded; by instituting a grammar-school in Ipswich, his native town, and by commencing the erection of Christ Church college at Oxford, which the king afterwards endowed. The state of the monastic institutions evidently required revision, and Wolsey was well inclined to be their reformer, thinking by

¹ 'Constitutional History,' p. 52. Shakespeare describes Queen Catherine as interceding for the people; Henry as declaring that he disapproved such exactions, and would grant a free pardon. Wolsey adds:

'Let it be noised,
That, through our intercession, this revokement
And pardon comes.'

Henry VIII., act i. scene 2.

the suppression of those which were ill-administered or superfluous, to obtain funds for schools and colleges of a better kind. To promote this favourite object, he obtained a bull from Pope Clement VII., in 1525, granting him permission to dissolve forty small monasteries. The charge of the young Princess Mary, the presumptive heiress of the crown, was entrusted to the cardinal; and he took pains also to regulate the king's hitherto ill-arranged household, where the numerous dependents displaced by him naturally increased the number of his enemies. It was reported that by the suppression of many monasteries and by other changes, Wolsey both filled his own purse and sent large sums to Rome, and the king admonished him to avoid exciting the murmurs of the people. It was probably to regain Henry's good-will or to moderate his displeasure, that in the year 1526 Wolsey presented to him his palace at Hampton Court, which he had erected at great expense, and which is said to have been the most splendid gift ever given to an English sovereign by one of his subjects. The king in return, 'of his gentle nature,' allowed Wolsey to make use of the royal palace at Richmond, which excited the indignation of many of the courtiers who could ill brook the cardinal's high promotion, and taunted him with his origin as the son of a butcher at Ipswich. The flattering hopes prevailing in England of ascendancy in France at the first news of the French king's captivity were soon at an end. Displeased with Wolsey and jealous of Henry, Charles agreed to the liberation of Francis, on the stipulation that Burgundy should be restored to the empire, which the King of France promised in order to gain his freedom, but subsequently refused to carry out.

The Princess Mary, who was yet a child, had been for some time affianced to the Emperor Charles V.; but he afterwards married Isabella of Portugal, and Mary's hand was then tendered to Francis I., and was for some time the subject of negotiation. The people of London were averse to the proposal, as the princess was heir-apparent, and in case of the king's death they would not have a Frenchman for their king. The lord mayor accordingly presented a memorial to Wolsey, stating that if he should advise the king to give his daughter to the King of France, he would show himself the enemy of his country. The princess remained unmarried, reserved, in long after years, for an unhappy marriage with the son of Charles V. While the Kings of England and France were arranging terms of alliance, a large body of needy adventurers—Germans, Spaniards, and others—under private leaders, overpowered and

plundered the city of Rome, which suffered more from their ravages than from any previous incursion of pagan barbarians. Pope Clement VII. was himself besieged in the castle of St. Angelo.¹ When the news reached England, Wolsey, as papal legate, sought, but unsuccessfully, to interest the people on his behalf, appealing to Henry also as 'Defender of the Faith.'

About the year 1517 the Protestant controversy begun by a young friar, Martin Luther, had aroused public attention. The debate soon spread from Germany to other countries. The greater number of the German nobles sided with the reformer, and the recent invention of printing, which multiplied readers, much increased the spread of the new opinions. Henry VIII., who prided himself on being versed in school divinity, was the reputed author of a treatise in refutation of the German heretic, which the Dean of Windsor carried to Rome, and which gained for the king from Leo X. the title of 'Defender of the Faith.'

In the year 1525 Luther replied to Henry with great rudeness, and severely aspersed Cardinal Wolsey.

The king published a severe and dignified answer, and expressed his unalterable esteem for Wolsey. 'No king in Europe,' says Hallam, 'appeared so steadfast in his allegiance to Rome as Henry VIII. at the moment when a storm sprang up that broke the chain for ever.'²

Wolsey gave the fullest publicity to Luther's opinions by ordering forty-two of his reputed errors to be posted on the church-door in every parish, that all might know that which had 'taken root in England like a noxious briar.' In the same year, 1525, an association was formed in London, chiefly consisting of men of the middle class, joined by a few of the clergy, for the purpose of sending agents through England to promote the sale of testaments and tracts in opposition to the Catholic ceremonies.

The clergy were alarmed: the English translation of the Bible must be destroyed, for its use would deprive them of their privilege to be the sole instructors of the people. A plea was sent forth that the translation was false and heretical.

On the morning of Shrove Tuesday, 1527, a procession appeared leading six men in the dress of penitents from the Fleet prison to St. Paul's church, each of whom carried faggots and a torch. The church was crowded, and on a platform, enthroned in splendour, sat Cardinal Wolsey, supported by

¹ Lingard, vi. 116.

² 'Constitutional History,' i. 60.

eighteen bishops, besides mitred abbots and others of the clergy. Inside a rail a fire was burning for the demolition, not at present of heretics themselves, but of the books which might make men swerve from the true faith. When the penitents had abjured their errors on their knees, craving pardon of God and the Church, Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, preached. The penitents were then led three times round the fire into which the tracts and testaments were cast. The sacrifice was completed, and the prisoners were absolved.

But while these testaments were burning at St. Paul's, and a long time afterwards, the printers were busy at Antwerp multiplying copies of an improved edition of that translation which the English bishops sought entirely to destroy. The internecine war between Roman Catholicism and the Protestant Bible was only beginning.¹

Wolsey was indefatigable in his efforts to repress the Protestant movement, and so active in London was the search for heretics, that sometimes butchers, tailors, and carpenters hid themselves in the holds of ships in the Thames, and were glad to escape across the sea; yet even abroad they were not safe, for governments were banded together in defence of the Church of Rome. Heresy showed itself also among the students at Cambridge. One of these students, named Hugh Latimer, son of a small farmer, was summoned before Wolsey upon the complaint of the Bishop of Ely. Wolsey, however, saw no fault in Latimer, and the frank boldness of his character pleased the king so well that he was afterwards appointed one of the royal chaplains.

In the spring of 1527 a French embassy arrived in London, which was magnificently entertained by Henry at Greenwich. Wolsey was afterwards received in France with the honours usually paid to royalty; but new complications were arising which were to entail the downfall of Wolsey, and the separation of Henry from that Church of which he had been named the Defender. Although Queen Catherine was some years older than her royal husband, she appeared during the first years of the reign to possess his affection, and well deserved the general esteem in which she was held. But it became at length too evident at court that another lady had attracted Henry's attention. He now reverted to those objections to his marriage with Catherine which had been set aside seventeen years before, and, after much study and discussion with theologians,

¹ See Dr. Milman's 'St. Paul's,' p. 188, and Froude's *History*, vol. 42.

appears to have convinced himself of the propriety of annulling a marriage which might possibly not have been legal. 'He believed,' says Lingard, 'that no impartial judge could pronounce against him;' and again took up his pen to write a legal treatise on his own case, employing every argument which his reading or the ingenuity of learned men could supply. The queen had been the mother of three sons who all died in early infancy, and on the precarious life of the Princess Mary now rested the hopes of the succession. The king's treatise was laid before Sir Thomas More, who suspended his judgment on the plea of his ignorance of theology, and before Dr. Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, who expressed an opinion against the projected divorce.

Wolsey does not appear to have opposed it, and rather contemplated his own further aggrandisement by promoting the advancement of the French Princess Renée to share Henry's throne. But when on Wolsey's return from his French mission, towards the end of 1527, Henry declared to him his intention of raising the beautiful Anne Boleyn to be his consort, the cardinal was alarmed and grieved, and, falling on his knees, besought the king to relinquish his design. Finding, however, that his opposition came too late and would only endanger his influence, he strove to efface all remembrance of it from the king's mind by exerting immediately his utmost energies on his side, pleading his cause before the prelates and divines, from whom he could obtain no further concession than readiness to refer the king's scruples to the Pope's decision.

'The common people, and especially women,' says Hall, 'abhorred all those who took part against Queen Catherine;' they believed that the king's pleasure was his law, that the queen was supplanted by a rival. This captivating young lady was a daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, the new Lord Rochford, and her mother the daughter of the Duke of Norfolk. From her earliest childhood, Anne Boleyn had been distinguished by court favour. She accompanied the king's sister to France on her marriage to Louis XII., and after a longer residence there than that of her mistress, she returned to England to be maid of honour to Queen Catherine. Her beauty and accomplishments speedily attracted admirers. Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland, sought her in marriage, but the king commanded Wolsey to prevent that union, and another bride was substituted. Catherine had already sent messages to apprise her nephew, the Emperor Charles V., of her painful situation. Wolsey was her enemy. The posture of affairs was in fact

extremely embarrassing both to the Pope and the cardinal. Clement VII. had but just escaped from the confinement in which he had been held by the Imperialists when the envoys arrived from the King of England. While grateful to Henry for his efforts in his favour, he nevertheless feared to offend Charles. He was ready at once to give Henry a dispensation to marry any woman he pleased, but with regard to the divorce he could only proceed warily.¹

Hostilities ensued between England and Spain, and the emperor reflected with much severity on the King of England, who had formerly invited him to marry that daughter whom he now proposed to deprive of her inheritance. 'Can I,' wrote Charles, 'pass over the injury with which he threatens my aunt by his application for a divorce, or the insult which he has offered to me? But I am aware from whom these suggestions proceed. I would not satisfy the rapacity of the Cardinal of York, nor use my strength to seat him in the chair of St. Peter, and he in return has sworn to be revenged.'

In England there were also internal difficulties. Owing to the failure of the harvest in the previous year, there was at the beginning of 1528 such a scarcity of corn that many persons were starved, and merchants feared that their stores would be pillaged by the people. Commissioners were sent into different districts to ascertain the general supply; but a most unwise order against the conveyance of wheat from the parts of the country where it was most abundant excited such discontent in London, that the lord mayor and aldermen applied to the all-powerful cardinal, declaring that unless corn could be brought the citizens must die of famine. Wolsey in return promised supplies from France, but none came. At length, by the aid of 'the gentle merchants,' corn was brought from Dantzic, and other parts of Germany and Flanders, so that London became well supplied, and the citizens 'loved the emperor and his subjects the better' for this good effect of trade.² This was not the only grievance. The merchants refused to frequent the new marts which had been opened in France as substitutes for those in Flanders, and 'durst not adventure into Spain.' Their broadcloths and other goods lay on their hands, and the people murmured for want of wages, so that there was danger of insurrection unless an armistice for eight months had been arranged with the government of the Netherlands. The king appears to have been more aware than the

¹ Lingard, vi. 128.

² Hall's Chronicle, p. 736.

cardinal of the evils which affected all classes when war stopped the export of goods. Wolsey's fears for the consequences of his unpopularity rendered him suspicious and tyrannical.

About the year 1527, a small play, or masque, was performed at Gray's Inn, which, although it had been composed long before, might be supposed to apply to the existing government. Under the form of allegory which was at that time in use, the *lady* 'Public Weal' was supposed to have been put aside from her right place, and 'Inward Grudge' and other discontented spirits, backed by a multitude, undertook to expel 'Negligence and Dissipation,' and to restore 'Public Weal.' The young lawyers acted this piece in costly apparel, and it met with much applause; but the cardinal's anger was kindled to that degree, that he sent Master Roe, the author, and one of the chief performers to the Fleet prison, until they were released by the interference of their friends.¹

The negotiation for a divorce, on which the king had now set his mind, was the turning-point of Wolsey's fortune. When he ventured to represent to Henry that in case the dispensation formerly granted by the Pope for his marriage with Catherine should be confirmed, the divorce could not be granted, he experienced such a blast of anger as fully apprised him of the hazardous position in which he stood. He began in haste to complete his buildings and procure the legal endowments of his colleges, and meantime despatched instructions to Rome, beseeching the Pope to grant the divorce, which would restore him to his former place in his sovereign's favour, well knowing that, in case of the failure of his efforts, no past services could screen him from Henry's resentment. The Pope, extremely embarrassed, and dreading the emperor's resentment, at length determined on sending Cardinal Campeggio to England as his legate, instructing him to proceed by slow journeys, to endeavour to reconcile the parties, to advise the queen to retire to a monastery, and to try the case according to the established forms with due caution, but not to pronounce judgment until he had consulted the Papal See; for the Pope was aware that one imprudent step might set Europe in a blaze, and leave him without friend or protector, exposed to the resentment of the emperor.² After a tedious journey, suspended at intervals by attacks of gout, Campeggio reached London in October, 1528, and was carried to his lodgings in a litter. In conferences with Henry, with whom he was not unacquainted, the legate

¹ Hall, p. 719.

² Lingard, vi. 138.

carefully concealed his sentiments. He repeatedly tried to induce Catherine to enter a convent, but she firmly replied that she must act not alone for herself but also for her daughter, whose rights she would never prejudice. The common voice of the people declared, in spite of Wolsey's efforts to intimidate them, that, let the king marry whom he would, the husband of the Princess Mary should be the next successor to the throne. The queen asked as a right to name as her counsel in the approaching trial foreigners who were subjects of her nephew. Her request was granted in part, for besides the English prelates whom the king assigned her, she was allowed to choose two advocates from Flanders.

Henry showed his deference to public opinion by summoning to his palace of Bridewell¹ the principal members of his court and the lord mayor and chief citizens, to whom he condescended to explain the reasons which had led to his estrangement from the emperor and to his alliance with France. He further enlarged on the delicate subject of the divorce, dwelling on his own scruples of conscience, and declaring his implicit reliance on the decision of the Pope's delegates. But although Henry thus deigned to explain, he did not forbear from threatening. If his subjects ventured to blame their sovereign, they should answer for their presumption with their heads.²

Whilst Henry still delayed the preparations for this important trial, intelligence reached England that the Pope's death might be expected. Wolsey's hopes revived immediately, and Henry's also; for he anticipated the cardinal's assistance when he should be promoted to the papal chair. The King of France joined efforts in his favour; but, contrary to expectation, Clement survived, and showed no inclination to lean to Henry's side. When the English envoys intruded into his sick room, the Pope declared that justice ought to be done to Catherine, and that he advised the king to proceed to the trial in his own realm, without further loss of time. It was on the last day of May, 1529, that the court met in the Parliament chamber at Blackfriars for this memorable trial, and the papal legates, Cardinals Campeggio and Wolsey, summoned the king and queen before them. The queen protested against the judges, and appealed to the Pope. At the next sitting, Henry sat in

¹ The ancient palace of Bridewell, at which this assembly was convened, was so named from St. Bride's well, Fleet Street. It had been repaired by Henry, but was converted into a workhouse by the next monarch, and being subsequently used as a house of correction, gave its name to other institutions of that nature.

² Lingard, vi. 141.

state on the right of the cardinals, Catherine on their left. Having protested that the judges were under the king's influence, and that she therefore declined to acknowledge their authority, the queen threw herself at the king's feet, saying, 'Sir, I beseech you to pity me, a woman and a stranger, without an assured friend or an impartial adviser.' She declared that she had been a faithful wife, had made her husband's pleasure her rule and duty, and 'had loved all those whom he loved.' With these meek words she withdrew, declining to plead in that court. Henry was aware of the impression made by her address; he acknowledged her goodness, and declared that it was owing to no dislike of her, but from scruples of conscience, that he instituted that suit. He promised to abide by the decision which the court might pronounce.¹ Several sittings were held in Catherine's absence, and she was declared contumacious for refusing to plead. It was in vain that Wolsey strove to hasten the decision. Campeggio inclined to the queen's side, and, fearful of Henry's anger, begged the Pope to withdraw the cause and place it within his own jurisdiction. Clement had now fallen completely under the emperor's influence, and a decree from Rome arrived forbidding Henry further to prosecute his cause before the legates, and citing him to appear by attorney in the papal court. Although this was but a formal process of law, it increased the king's irritation.

It was in vain that Wolsey now strove to regain the ground he had lost in Henry's favour. While Catherine viewed him as her enemy, Anne Boleyn employed all her interest against him, and the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk were his open enemies. His ruin was at length effected, but by means that were highly unjust.

Long before the beginning of the Protestant schism, papal interference had aroused English jealousy and opposition. It had assumed various shapes, occurring now in the election of bishops, now in acts of excommunication, now in provision for the succession to benefices, now in the introduction of bulls and foreign instruments. Indeed, the Act of Præmunire subjected to perpetual imprisonment those who should bring into England papal bulls for these purposes. The Pope's usurpation of patronage was ended at one stroke.² It was doubtful, however, whether the legatine court could be brought within the range

¹ The address which appears in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.* is borrowed from Hall's Chronicle. Lingard replies to Dr. Burnet, who doubted whether Henry and Catherine attended the court, citing a letter of the king's alluding to the occasion.—Lingard, vi. 151, note.

² Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' ii. 48. (16 Richard II. c. 5).

of this statute; it was certain that the cardinal had previously obtained the royal licence, and was therefore authorised to hold it. The old statutes had been little regarded, and many legates had acted in England without opposition. Henry had lately promised to abide by the decision of that very tribunal against which he now determined to protest on the plea of its illegality.

On October 9, the day when the cardinal opened his Court of Chancery, the attorney-general filed two bills against him in the Court of King's Bench, charging him with having, as the Pope's legate, transgressed the statute above mentioned.

Wolsey well knew the temper of the king, and that to maintain his innocence would exclude him from all chance of pardon. He offered no defence, submitted without a murmur, and resigned the great seal into the hands of the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, who brought a written order from the king. He gave up the whole of his personal estate, valued at 500,000 crowns; he owed all, he said, to his sovereign's bounty; he was ready to restore what he had received; he threw himself without reserve on the king's mercy. No submission could be more complete, no despair more abject. Wolsey was commanded to leave his residence, York House, which afterwards became the palace of Whitehall, and to remove to Esher to await the royal pleasure, where all necessary supplies were to be allowed him, 'but not after his old pompous and superfluous fashion; for all his goods were seized for the king's use.'¹ An inventory of the rich contents of York House is still preserved in the British Museum. Among the stores were pieces of silk velvet and satin, and a thousand pieces of Holland cloth. The gallery was furnished with cloth-of-gold and silver, and long tables were laden with gold and silver plate, rare luxuries at that time, for even persons of rank had scarcely relinquished the use of pewter.

When Wolsey withdrew to Esher, a thousand boats were on the river laden with people to see him departing, as they expected, to the Tower. A fortnight later, an unusual crowd assembled to behold Henry coming from Greenwich in his barge to open Parliament. Sir Thomas More was appointed lord chancellor. The great seal had seldom been given to any but a bishop, but More's merit was universally acknowledged; he was celebrated throughout Europe as a scholar, had practised the law with success, and had been employed by the king in several foreign embassies. Wolsey himself is said to have

¹ Hall's Chronicle, p. 760.

declared that he knew of no one better fitted to succeed him. The preponderating influence in public affairs now rested with the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, the great military nobles of the age, and Sir William Fitz-William, the lord admiral.

Henry was seated on the throne in the House of Lords, when the new chancellor made an eloquent oration, extolling the king as the Good Shepherd, and reprobating the evil conduct of 'the great wether,' which had just fallen under his 'gentle correction.' Although free discussion was allowed by law, debates in the House of Commons seldom occurred except on a demand for money. But the Commons commenced this session with a remarkable address to the king, detailing, amongst other matters, complaints against the clergy. They complained of exactions with respect to the probates of wills, of interference in various ways, with property, and of pluralities—that priests who acted as stewards to bishops monopolised farms and grazing land in every county; that abbots, priors, and other clergy, bought and sold wool, cloth, &c., like merchants; and that an ill-informed priest sometimes held ten or more benefices without residing in any, while 'many learned scholars at the university were without benefice' altogether. The members appear to have spoken out more boldly than formerly concerning these grievances; but although they complained of the discord produced by efforts to suppress heresy, and that innocent persons were entangled by artful questions and frequently brought to disgrace or to a cruel death in Smithfield, they yet regretted its increase. Among other grievances, the number of holidays occasioned much idleness and vice, and proved particularly injurious when occurring at harvest-time. For the redress of these grievances they solemnly appealed to the king as the only head, sovereign, and protector.

Henry directed Parliament to consider what relief could be afforded, and in the meantime referred to the bishops, who replied that 'no notable person had of late fallen into heresy, only certain apostate friars and monkish vagabonds.' But they assured the king that, if hitherto they had been too remiss in inflicting penalties on heretics, they would do their duty with greater care.

In the year 1535 nineteen German Anabaptists were examined in St. Paul's Cathedral concerning their opinions, fourteen of whom were condemned to be burnt. Anabaptists, although in most cases poor ignorant fanatics, were proscribed by the general opinion of Protestants as well as of Catholics not only as heretics but as lawless socialists, who were ready to

attack the rights of property and all existing institutions; and for them there scarcely appears to have been in all England a murmur of compassion. They 'were the Ishmaelites of the religious world.'¹

Instead of reforming the points complained of in their own procedure, the bishops instituted a terrible persecution. It was their especial work to hunt out and punish heretics; but the lord chancellor was also enjoined by his oath on taking office to do his utmost in the suppression of heresy, and Sir Thomas More, the virtuous and learned chancellor, in severity far exceeded Wolsey. Some writers have been reluctant to allow that a statesman whose writings were in advance of his time, and 'whose life was of blameless beauty,' could have assisted in such severe treatment of Protestants.² The prisons were soon crowded with reputed heretics, many of whom escaped death by recanting their opinions, but five were burnt in Smithfield and others in the country.

Latimer, undaunted by his past peril, wrote to the king, urging that it was the Divine will that the faith should be defended 'by his word alone.' The hand of the persecutor was not stayed. The rack and the lash and the stake did their horrible work; but Henry appears to have respected Latimer's spirit, for a living was given him in the following year. Latimer needed the king's protection to save him from the persecution of the bishops, but in 1535 he was made Bishop of Worcester.

A bill attainting Wolsey of high treason went through the House of Lords, but was thrown out in the Commons, where he was defended with spirit by his late secretary, Thomas Cromwell.

The charges were chiefly Wolsey's abuse of his legatine authority and his presumption in writing '*Ego et Rex meus*,' thus setting himself above the king; that he had caused his cardinal's hat to be engraved on the coin, and had sent English gold to Rome, to the impoverishment of the realm. It appears probable that Henry did not wish the attainder to take effect.³

Grief and anxiety so affected Wolsey, that at Christmas, 1529, he had a severe attack of fever.

The king was softened by his illness, sent him three physicians, and assured him of his kindly regard. Even Anne Boleyn sent him a tablet of gold as a friendly token. In the

¹ Dr. Milman's '*St. Paul's*,' p. 196.

² See Froude's remarks in vol. i. of '*History of England*,' p. 344, and ii. 73.

³ Lingard, vi. 160, note.

February following, the cardinal was commanded to retire to his archbishopric of York, and not to return southward without the royal licence. Wolsey's journey was very slowly performed, with frequent rests at abbeys on the route, and he remained till Whitsuntide at a prebend's house near Newark.

Although Wolsey returned to his diocese under compulsion, he set a good example to the bishops during his brief sojourn in the North, and exhibited a temper charitable and judicious. Some, however, said that he strove to win partisans, that the king was informed that he was intending to be installed at York with unprecedented magnificence, and that he wrote letters to the Pope and other princes with no favourable influence upon Henry's cause. At Michaelmas he removed to Cawood Castle, seven miles from York, and began to prepare for his installation.¹ Here he was suddenly arrested by the Earl of Northumberland on a charge of high treason. The exact motives are unknown which induced Henry to issue this order; the allegation was that the cardinal was practising against the government. Wolsey instantly declared that the king had no more loyal servant than himself, and that he wished to be confronted with his accusers; but his anguish of mind was apparent, and at Sheffield Park, the seat of the Earl of Shrewsbury, he became so ill as to be unavoidably detained for a fortnight. On again resuming his journey, he felt so weak that, when he reached the gate of the monastery at Leicester, he said to the abbot, 'I am come to lay my bones among you,' and did not arise from the bed to which he was immediately borne. On the second day, seeing Kingston, the lieutenant of the Tower, in his chamber, he gave him a last message to the king, then regretted that he had not done his duty as faithfully to God as to his sovereign. He declared Henry to be 'a prince of most royal courage; rather than miss any part of his will, he will endanger one-half of his kingdom; and I assure you that I have often knelt before him, sometimes for three hours together, to dissuade him from his desire, and could not prevail.' Next morning, November 29, Wolsey expired, in the sixtieth year of his age; he was buried in the abbey church of Leicester.

Wolsey had little of the persecutor in theological matters, generally contenting himself with excluding heretical writings from circulation; but in a last message to the king he urged him 'to repress the now pernicious sect of Lutherans.' During

¹ Hall, p. 773.

seventeen years, from 1512 till 1529, Wolsey had directed the affairs of England with marked ability. Contemporaries were, however, more awed than captivated by his lofty bearing. The Venetian ambassador, Sebastian Giustiniani, described him in his despatches as of great ability, learned, indefatigable, handsome, and eloquent. 'He has the reputation of being extremely just: he favours the poor by hearing their suits, and makes the lawyers plead gratis for all paupers. He is in very great repute, seven times more so than if he were Pope.' In Wolsey's palace there were eight rooms to cross before reaching the audience chamber, all of which were hung with tapestry. Wolsey requested the Signory of Venice to send him a hundred Damascene carpets; and the ambassador urged that if the present were sent, those concessions for which Venice prayed would be attended to, for 'the cardinal is the person who rules both the king and the entire kingdom.' But the Venetian thought 'the king to be more free and sincere in judging what is right than the cardinal.' When the ambassador first arrived, Wolsey was accustomed to say 'His Majesty will do so-and-so;' by degrees he changed to 'We shall do so-and-so;' at last he assumed the tone of 'I shall do so-and-so.'¹ After he obtained the authority of legate, Wolsey arrogated to himself superiority beyond all who had previously held office in England. He commented upon Warham's presumption, in that he, the Archbishop of Canterbury, subscribed a letter addressed to the cardinal, 'your loving brother,' eliciting the natural observation, 'This man is drunk with too much prosperity.'²

In his living picture of this remarkable character, Shake-

¹ See 'Four Years at the Court of Henry VIII,' a selection from the 'Venetian Despatches,' edited by Mr. Rawdon Brown, ii. 54, 314.

² Skelton, poet laureate and rector of Diss, in Norfolk, who was honoured by the praise of Erasmus, thus satirised the behaviour of Wolsey in the Star Chamber:

'In chamber of Stars
All matters there he mars;
Clapping his rod on the board,
No man dare speak a word;
For he hath all the saying
Without any renaying.
He rolleth in his Records;
He sayeth, "How say ye, my Lords?
Is not my reason good?"
Some say "Yes," and some
Sit still, as they were dumb.'

The reverend poet had better have been one of the latter. His satire aroused such violent persecution from Wolsey, that Skelton fled to the sanctuary of Westminster to escape his vengeance, and there ended his life.

speare has perpetuated his efforts to encourage learning.¹ His death at this particular juncture withdrew from public affairs at the crisis of the age the statesman who had hitherto brought to bear upon them the most authoritative agency.

During the last year of Wolsey's life, the divorce continued the pressing subject in Henry's mind. In the beginning of 1530 he sent a deputation to the Pope and the emperor, consisting (besides others) of the Earl of Wiltshire, father of Anne Boleyn, the Bishop of London, and Thomas Cranmer, who tried to remove the emperor's opposition by offering to restore Catherine's marriage portion, and promising her an honourable maintenance during her life. But Charles would accept of no terms affecting the honour of his aunt. If the Pope should decide against her, he would be silent; if otherwise, he would support her with all his power; and the emperor was highly indignant at the presence among the envoys of the father of Anne Boleyn. Wolsey had recommended the king to obtain favourable opinions from the most learned divines and universities. The University of Paris was considered the first in Europe. Henry wrote to the dean with his own hand; Montmorency, prime minister of France, used all his influence; all the absent members of the university supposed to be favourable were summoned to Paris; yet the majority at first appeared to be against Henry, and it was only by dexterous management that a vote was at length obtained in his favour, and sent for publication to England. In Germany, Luther and other reformers loudly condemned the divorce. Much difficulty was found in procuring favourable opinions at Oxford and Cambridge.² It had been intended to collect a mass of opinions from different authorities, in order to bias the Pope's decision; but for these was now substituted a letter signed by the English lords, spiritual and temporal, and by a certain number of commoners in the name of the people of England. The letter complained of the Pope's partiality and delay. It was in vain that Clement was conjured to end this long perplexity in favour of Henry, who had so lately assisted in saving the Papacy from ruin. Clement was not averse to the king's cause; he had hoped that his legates might have decided it without his interposition; but he could not resist the personal influence of the emperor.³

¹ 'Ever witness for him

Those twins of learning, that he raised in you,
Ipswich, and Oxford! one of which fell with him.'

Henry VIII., act iv. scene 2.

² Hallam, i. 67.

³ Lingard, vi. 169-175.

In Henry's great embarrassment, having gone too far to recede with honour, and looking in vain to the highest tribunal for adequate authority to justify his course, he was saved from immediate difficulty by the bold advice of that Thomas Cromwell, late secretary to Wolsey, who, although he defended his master in the House of Commons, had not shared his disgrace.

Might it not be possible to take a lesson from those princes of Germany who had lately thrown off the yoke of Rome? The Pope's sanction might have availed to avert the emperor's enmity, but possibly it was not indispensable, provided Parliament would declare the King of England head of the Church in his own dominions. Henry thanked Cromwell for the suggestion, and made him a member of his privy council, where he soon disclosed a plan to secure the submission of the clergy. When Wolsey had been accused of invading the statutes, he had offered no defence; all the clergy were declared liable to the same penalty. Convocation assembled in haste and offered the king a present of £100,000 for a full pardon; but a boon was within reach more precious than their gold. Henry insisted that he should be acknowledged 'to be the protector and only supreme head of the Church and clergy of England.' After much debate this was accorded, but with the qualification, 'as far as the law of Christ will allow,' words which left an opening for a different interpretation.

Henry was yet irresolute: he had hoped to intimidate the Court of Rome, but had not determined to separate himself from its communion.¹ The proffered grant was paid by the clergy, but the mode of its collection occasioned great murmurs among the poorer curates, who declared that they had a bare living and had never offended in 'the præmunire.' 'Let the archbishops and bishops pay!' A few were sent to prison, says Hall, for disobedience in this matter.

Whilst these precautions were taken in England, the Pope signed the brief prohibiting the divorce, and it was solemnly published in Flanders. To forestall any attempt at intimidation, the lord chancellor, attended by twelve peers, went to the House of Commons, where the favourable opinions of the universities, as well as papers from eminent divines, were read in English, and the members were desired to inform their country neighbours of the justice of the king's suit.

Henry now sent messengers of rank to request the queen, for the quiet of his conscience, to submit her cause to the

¹ Lingard, vi. 179.

decision of umpires; but Catherine replied with unshaken firmness, that she was the king's lawful wife, and would submit to no decision but that of the Pope. Until this time Henry had continued to dine in the queen's company, and had paid fatherly attention to his daughter, the Lady Mary. In July, 1531, Catherine was apprised that the king wished her to retire from Windsor. She went to Ampthill, in Bedfordshire, and from that seclusion wrote to the Pope, announcing her expulsion from court and praying for justice. Catherine's letter added to the Pope's embarrassment. He did not yet wish to break off relations with the King of England, and wrote urging Henry in forcible, but still affectionate terms, to recall his queen, whose conduct had been irreproachable, and to dismiss all thought of another marriage. Clement urged this upon the king as due to his own character, but declared that he should consider such a change of conduct as the most signal of the favours conferred by Henry on the see of Rome.¹ But the king was now determined to persevere.

The contribution to Rome called 'the Annates, or First Fruits,' which was paid by most nations of Europe, had formed the chief supply for the maintenance of cardinals at Rome. It was now said by the king's advisers that this impost was at first intended for the defence of Christendom from the infidel, and that a tax amounting to £4,000 a year was a drain on the national wealth. Parliament therefore passed an Act for its abolition, and bishops were forbidden in future to pay their first fruits to the see of Rome, on penalty of forfeiting all their profits to the king. Should the Pope decline to ratify their election on these terms, the consecration by the archbishop, or by two other bishops, would be held sufficient. Henry sent for the Speaker of the House of Commons, and declared in presence of other members of both Houses, that, finding that the prelates had been accustomed at their consecration to take an oath to the Pope which conflicted with their oath of allegiance to their sovereign, he desired a change to be made, so that he should not 'be thus deluded' of his spiritual subjects.

By this new course of proceeding the king lost the services of one of his most faithful ministers. Sir Thomas More was conscientiously attached to the Roman Catholic Church, had a great dread of heresy, and respected the Pope's authority as the great centre of Catholic union. He had been on terms of intimacy with Henry, who had urgently tried to obtain his approval of the divorce. Now, however, when More perceived

¹ Lingard, vi. 183.

that his legal assent would be required for what he in his heart condemned, he resigned his office, 'through his dear friend,' the Duke of Norfolk. While Wolsey held the post, bribes had been largely given; 'even the door-keepers got great gains;' but More, with a scrupulousness then thought extraordinary, had declined all presents from suitors.¹ The clergy offered him on his resignation a present of £5,000 as a mark of respect, but this was also declined; and Sir Thomas, who was far from rich, immediately reduced his expenditure, and took counsel with the large family who lived under his patriarchal roof how they might best adapt their way of living to their changed fortune. The Great Seal was given to Sir Thomas Audley, speaker of the House of Commons.

In the autumn of the same year the Kings of England and France held festive meetings at Calais and Boulogne, attended with costly magnificence, and Anne Boleyn, who had been created Marchioness of Pembroke, accompanied Henry.

According to Hall, Henry was privately married to Anne in November, soon after his return from France.² It was not till the ensuing Easter that she was publicly recognised as queen.

The death of Archbishop Warham made room for the promotion of Thomas Cranmer, who had been strenuously on the king's side. Although his advocacy of the divorce was well known, and although some years previously, during an embassy in Germany, Cranmer had contracted a private marriage, the Pope did not refuse to confirm the appointment in the usual manner. Cranmer, however, appears to have hesitated whether to accept of the Pope's sanction. He offered to receive the primacy from the king alone; but Henry did not wish him as yet to refuse obedience to the Holy See, and accordingly, he at the same time subscribed the usual form and protested that he did not bind himself to oppose any of the king's rights or such reforms of the Church as might appear desirable. He read this protest himself publicly three times, and it was recorded. Henry now ventured to declare that 'the sovereign had no superior on earth.' It was therefore needless to await the decision of any tribunal. The archbishop, assisted by other prelates, opened an ecclesiastical court at Dunstable, within a few miles of Catherine's residence, before which on three successive days the ex-queen was summoned to appear. Inflexible

¹ See Mackintosh's 'Life of Sir Thomas More,' pp. 73, 82.

² Lingard asserts that the private marriage did not take place till January 25, 1533. Hall names 'St. Erkenwald's day.'

in her line of conduct, Catherine took no notice of the summons. She was pronounced contumacious, and Cranmer declared that the marriage had been invalid from the beginning, because contracted contrary to the canonical law. However repugnant to justice, some such act was necessary to justify and legalise the new marriage contracted by the king.

The much-debated divorce having been published, not indeed by the Pope, but by Henry's own archbishop, the new queen was crowned on June 1, and the ceremony, which was performed with great magnificence, was attended by all the English nobility.

In the September following, the Princess Elizabeth was born. Although disappointed that the infant was not a son, Henry gave all possible dignity to the daughter whom he now called his heir. The highest nobles of the land were present at her christening, and by the king's command Archbishop Cranmer stood godfather.

Shakespeare, with poetic licence, represents Cranmer as breaking forth in prophecy of the glories of Elizabeth's 'maiden reign.' No dark shadow on that splendid day foretold that mother's death upon the scaffold within three years, or that her child would then be declared illegitimate like the Lady Mary. The King of France also stood godfather to the princess by proxy. As there could not be two queens of England, Catherine was now desired to adopt the title of Dowager-Princess of Wales, and her attendants were forbidden to address her as queen. But she refused to submit to the authority of 'a man of the king's own making,' and Henry did not proceed to further extremities against her. The dreaded decision at length arrived.

On March 23, 1534, a consistory was held at Rome, at which nineteen out of twenty-two cardinals declared that Henry's marriage with Catherine was lawful and valid, thus invalidating the second, and impugning every subsequent act. If Henry should still refuse obedience, the Pope declared that he would be excommunicated from the Church, and forfeit his right to his subjects' allegiance. It was arranged that within four months of this announcement, the emperor should be prepared to invade England, and that Henry should be deposed. The Imperialists displayed their exultation at this sentence by bonfires and discharges of cannon. Those fires which blazed triumphantly at Rome foreshadowed the doom of many innocent men in England. 'The Tudor spirit was at length awake in Henry.' He had waited for the Pope's final decision before

he entirely broke off from Rome.¹ The English clergy now declared in convocation that the Pope had no more power in England than any other bishop. It would have been highly dangerous to have uttered that opinion five years earlier. There was still much danger of an excess of the Protestant spirit, and the bishops were commanded to teach their clergy, and the clergy to instruct the people as to these recent changes. It was declared by royal proclamation that the king alone was the supreme head of the Church, and that mass-books and other manuals in which the Pope's authority was set forth were utterly abolished.

Books were published and distributed which vindicated the king's conduct, and contained the favourable opinions of universities and learned men; but all these methods failed in obtaining perfect obedience, particularly in the North, and even some of the bishops fell under censure. The first martyr of this period was Elizabeth Barton, a poor woman of lowly birth, called 'the Nun of Kent.' The age was superstitious, and the clergy frequently encouraged the people to trust those who claimed to be gifted with powers of prophecy and divination. In the parish of Aldington, in Kent, much attention had been excited for several years by this young woman, who was subject to fits or trances, and claimed to hold occasional intercourse with unseen powers. In the village there was a chapel of the Virgin Mary, to which many pilgrims resorted; and Elizabeth declared, when in a half-conscious state, that the recovery of her health would be secured if she visited that shrine on a certain day. She was assisted to fulfil her desire, 2,000 persons accompanying her in procession singing hymns. The cure followed, and Elizabeth's fame spread. The king sent a book said to contain her predictions, to be examined by Sir Thomas More as chancellor. More called it but 'a poor production;' and Elizabeth Barton might have escaped punishment if she had not ventured to utter a prophecy unfavourable to the king. Among the lower classes, and especially among women, there was a strong feeling against the divorce. Elizabeth Barton ventured to take the side of Queen Catherine, and declared that if the king should marry again he would not remain on the throne a month, but would die a villain's death. It seems probable that she had heard of the mission of Joan of Arc, and fancied herself destined to save her queen and her Church from ruin. The time at which she had fixed the king's doom had passed; he had married, the infant princess was

¹ Froude, ii. 214, 219.

baptized; Henry, it might appear, could afford to pardon so crazy an impostor. But a clergyman named Bocking, to whom the new archbishop had entrusted the inquiry, insisted that the danger remained. Among the numerous persons of rank who countenanced Elizabeth's pretensions, the ex-queen and the Lady Mary had been named, and the mendicant friars who were said to be in league with her were itinerant missionaries of sedition. She had been for some time established at the priory of St. Sepulchre at Canterbury as a prophetess. A commission was issued to Cromwell, Cranmer, and Latimer to unravel the mystery, and Elizabeth and five of the monks were sent to the Tower for examination. Their trial before the Star Chamber was followed by their conviction; on the succeeding Sunday they were exhibited to the people on a raised platform by the side of the pulpit at St. Paul's Cross, and after the sermon their confessions were read to the crowd. Their final sentence was deferred until an act of attainder had been brought into the House of Lords. On April 21, about a month after judgment was pronounced against Henry at Rome, Elizabeth, with the clergymen of her parish, who first encouraged her, and five friars, were led to execution. Before this extraordinary woman suffered death, she summoned strength to speak a few words to the people, confessing her error, but passing a just censure on others. 'Hither am I come to die,' said she, 'and I am the cause of my own death and that of all who suffer with me. And yet I am not so much to be blamed, considering that these learned men knew me to be a poor wench without learning, and might have perceived that the things done by me were altogether feigned. But because these were profitable to them, they praised me, and bare witness that I did them by the Holy Spirit; and I, being puffed up with their praises, fancied that I might pretend what I would, which hath brought me to this case, for which I now cry to God and the king's highness for mercy.'¹

An Act had been passed requiring an oath to be taken in favour of the Princess Elizabeth's succession, which was followed by another attaching the extreme penalties of high treason to any person who should 'deprive the king, queen, or their heirs-apparent, of the dignity, title, or name of their royal estates.' To deny the king to be the sole supreme head of the Church was henceforth a capital offence. By this terrible Act any man was liable, if he failed to give satisfactory answers under official

¹ Hall, p. 814; Froude, ii. 205.

examination: More warned Bishop Fisher of the danger to which they were thus exposed.¹

In the same month in which Elizabeth Barton was put to death, the Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More were summoned before the council and required to take this oath, the preamble of which denied the Pope's right to grant the dispensation legalising Henry's marriage with Catherine. Dr. Fisher and Sir Thomas More both agreed to take the oath in favour of Elizabeth's succession, that being within the range of parliamentary decision, but refused to deny the Pope's authority. They were consequently sent to the Tower.

It appears improbable that Henry at first intended to take the lives of men whom he had formerly respected so highly as the Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More. The severity with which they were treated was greater than that to which the humblest felon is now exposed. The aged bishop had not sufficient clothing for warmth, and Sir Thomas More was compelled, by the want of any other implement, to write with a piece of coal.² When repeatedly questioned on the disputed points, they steadfastly refused to disclaim the Pope's authority. Archbishop Cranmer is said to have besought the king to accept their assent to the succession; but 'the king would not be satisfied with their swearing by halves.' Fisher and More had been in prison more than a year when they were summoned to trial separately at Westminster Hall.

It was true that the bishop had encouraged the visions of Elizabeth Barton and had opposed the king's designs; but he was past eighty, too old and too venerable, it might have been hoped, for punishment. Unhappily, the Pope, in angry defiance of Henry, made the aged prisoner a cardinal, and thus cut off from him all hope of mercy. It was in vain that the venerable prelate declared that he had never sought that honour, and would not accept it. By refusing to acknowledge the king's supremacy, the bishop was liable to the doom of a traitor. His trial was short, and the only mercy accorded was that he should not suffer more than simple death. A few days afterwards, on July 1, Sir Thomas More, dressed in a coarse woollen gown, held up his hand as a criminal in that court where he had so lately presided. Many spectators were deeply moved, and after sentence 'his very dear friend,' Sir William Kingston, the constable of the Tower, conducted him back with tears. His

¹ See an explanation of the two Acts—that for the succession, the refusal of which was but 'misprision of treason,' and the severe act which followed it. The latter was repealed in the first year of Edward VI.—Froude, ii. 330.

² Lingard, vi. 219, and 'Life of Sir Thomas More.'

excellent daughter, Margaret Roper, watched for him at the Tower wharf. In spite of the family ties which bound him to life, More's fortitude equalled that of the aged bishop.

A cry of indignation went up throughout Europe at the news of this execution. When Charles V. heard of the execution of Sir Thomas More, he sent for the English ambassador, who appeared abashed, and said that he knew nothing of it. 'Well,' said the emperor, 'it is too true, and if we had been the master of such a servant, we should rather have lost our best city than such a worthy counsellor.'¹

It was not from learned men and the highest in the land alone that submission to the new Acts was required. The signatures of monks and nuns were taken in convents, and a formal decision against the Pope was obtained from the universities. Parliament declared in favour of the king's supremacy without any saving clause.

Orders were given to erase the word Pope from the books used in public worship, and all schoolmasters were required to inculcate the new doctrine. The monks of the London Charterhouse were esteemed as a very holy order. They had taken Queen Catherine's side, and they refused to subscribe the oath of supremacy. Their priors being summoned before the Privy Council, attempted in vain to free themselves from the charge of disaffection. They were charged with 'treacherously desiring to deprive the king of his title of supreme head of the Church,' were convicted accordingly, and executed with all possible rigour.

For the first time in England, priests not previously degraded by the Church were brought to die on the scaffold in their ecclesiastical dress. Meantime the old penalty was still inflicted on obstinate heretics. John Frith, a learned man, who had been long confined in the Tower for his book against Purgatory, and a tailor, 'a very simple and unlearned man,' both perished in the flames.

It was far more easy in the sixteenth century to find men ready to die for their belief than those who would admit the innocence of difference of opinion. The great question of the king's supremacy was conscientiously and heroically resisted and tyrannically enforced, but it was of very material consequence to the king. Upon that condition only was Queen Anne his legal wife; otherwise the Princess Elizabeth was illegitimate, Henry sinful, and the Lady Mary must remain his sole heir. In foreign countries, where the names of Fisher and More had

¹ 'Life of Sir Thomas More,' p. 104.

long been respected, no language was thought too severe for the tyrant who brought them to execution. They had fallen martyrs to their attachment to the head of the Catholic Church; and Pope Paul III., who had within the year succeeded to the vacillating Clement, was induced to prepare against Henry a bull no less vindictive than those formerly issued by the most aspiring pontiffs.¹ After enumerating the offences which Henry had committed, Paul allowed him ninety days in which to appear at Rome to justify his conduct, declaring that if he failed therein he and his abettors should be excommunicated and the king deprived of his crown. He required all the clergy and monastic bodies to withdraw from his dominions, and not only absolved Henry's subjects from their oaths of allegiance, but even commanded them to take up arms against their king. Foreign nations were by this decree forbidden to trade with England, and all Henry's obedient subjects were implicated in his guilt. But where in Europe could the Pope find a prince willing to execute such an instrument? Charles and Francis, jealous rivals, both sought Henry's friendship and feared his anger. The times had greatly changed since a Pope had power to lay a kingdom under an interdict; and Paul soon found his threats unavailing, and for a season suppressed the bull which he had so precipitately issued.

Queen Catherine had declined the offer of an asylum made her by her imperial nephew, and continued to reside on one of the royal manors, retaining her title, although the use of it had been forbidden.

Her health gradually declined, and she died at Kimbolton on January 8. From her death-bed she dictated a short letter to the king, whom she called her 'Most dear lord, king, and husband,' expressing forgiveness for all her wrongs, and recommending her daughter and her servants to his protection. The appeal is said to have touched Henry's feelings, and he designed a kind message in return, which she did not live to receive. Catherine was interred in Peterborough Cathedral with the usual pomp.² It might have been expected that the security of Anne's position would be improved by the death of the first

¹ Lingard, vi. 225-227. The Catholic historian evidently disapproves of this extraordinary instrument, and says that he cannot find any proof that it was ever made public.

² A letter is given in the appendix of Lingard's History (vol. vi.), addressed in the king's name to Lady Bedingfield, whom he appointed one of the chief mourners at the funeral of his 'dearest sister, the Lady Catherine, widow of our brother Prince Arthur,' and summoning Lady Bedingfield to Kimbolton, from which place the corpse was to be carried to Peterborough for interment.

queen, but it was far otherwise. It had been impossible by any Act of Parliament, or by the infliction of any severity, to establish the validity of Anne Boleyn's marriage in the opinion of Henry's Roman Catholic subjects, and she was surrounded by the most bitter enemies. She and her family were detested by the Catholics as partisans of Luther, by the Imperialists as French, by the nobility on account of the arrogance which they had shown in their high positions. Calumnies without any basis of credibility were spread abroad that Queen Anne had poisoned Catherine, and had laid plots against the life of the Princess Mary. So long as she had the strong protection of the king's affection the tongue of calumny was tied; but, according to the report of the French ambassador, Henry's fickle fancy had already changed; he had become an admirer of the beautiful Jane Seymour, one of the queen's maids of honour.¹ No sooner was it whispered that the king desired to be rid of his present queen, than all the accumulated malice of years—truths, fictions, exaggerations, blended together—were ready prepared for promulgation. Before Anne attracted the king's notice she had been attached to Lord Percy, which was made the basis of terrible accusations. She had been vain and giddy, and very imprudent in some of her intimacies. It was soon evident that Henry desired to sacrifice her that he might again be free, and a committee was appointed on which were the Lord Chancellor, the Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, the father of Anne, Lord Wiltshire, and others, to consider the charges. She was sent to the Tower and secretly examined, in the expectation of drawing fresh evidence from her own confessions. Anne is said to have despaired of life when she was first accused; but when she was led before the tribunal formed for her trial in the hall of the Tower, to reply to charges of unfaithfulness as a wife and disloyalty towards the king, she is said to have replied with so much temper and propriety as to raise hopes among the spectators of her acquittal. The court pronounced her guilty, and the Duke of Norfolk, as high steward, sentenced her to death, either by burning or beheading, according to the king's will. It was in vain that at this terrible moment Anne declared in a forcible but respectful manner that she had been to the king a true and faithful wife. She was afterwards brought to acknowledge a pre-contract with Lord Percy, and on this plea, Archbishop Cranmer, who had dissolved Henry's union with Catherine, declared the pre-

¹ See 'The Pilgrim,' p. 103.

sent union also to have been invalid from the beginning, thus constituting the infant Elizabeth as illegitimate as the Princess Mary had been previously declared. The supposed guilt of the queen involved criminal accusations against her brother Lord Rochford, three privy councillors, and Smeaton, the king's musician. They were found guilty, and suffered death on May 17, all except Smeaton being beheaded on account of their rank. Lord Rochford declared himself innocent of all the charges, except that of having joined the new sect of religion and of having infected many others. Such was in those days the guilt attaching to heresy, that he was induced to acknowledge the justice of the sentence.

On the 19th, two days after her brother, the hapless queen was led to execution on Tower Green, where, by the king's orders, the Dukes of Suffolk and Richmond, and the Lord Mayor and principal citizens, were assembled as spectators. Her fate she met with fortitude, her trials with meekness. 'I come here,' said she, 'only to die, and thus to yield myself humbly to the will of my lord, the king. And if in life I did ever offend the king's grace, surely do I now atone for the same.' Whatever might be the urgency for another marriage, the king violated all rules of propriety by marrying Jane Seymour the day after Anne's execution.

The general opinion concerning the base immorality and servility of the court is seen in the imperial ambassador's letter: 'If they want a divorce,' says he, 'never fear, they will find witnesses in plenty.' The domestic records of Queen Anne's trial were destroyed. Trifling acts of imprudence were probably magnified into crimes to bring about the destruction of a hapless woman, the victim of a powerful faction.¹

After Anne's death, the Princess Mary was received into partial favour by her father, and was allowed an establishment, without, however, being recognised as the king's heir. For the sake of peace she at last consented to acknowledge the king as head of the Church, and the unlawfulness of her mother's marriage. Impatient to secure his kingdom to a son, Henry obtained from Parliament the power, in case of leaving no children by his present or any future wife, to bequeath the crown as he might think best, in which act he is said to have

¹ Hallam says 'nothing in this detestable reign is worse than this trial,' and considers that Burnet, in his 'History of the Reformation,' set Anne's innocence in a very clear light.—'Constitutional History,' i. 32. Mr. Froude, in further remarks (see 'Fraser's Magazine,' June and July 1870), has taken a milder view than in his History.

had in view his cherished but illegitimate son, the Duke of Richmond, then in his eighteenth year. The young duke died, however, before the Act was finally concluded.¹ The emperor's resentment on account of the indignities endured by his aunt was allayed when her death was followed by the execution of her successor; the Pope also apologised for having conferred the cardinalate upon the Bishop of Rochester, and looked forward to a reconciliation with King Henry.² But although the emperor and the Pope might excuse the king's past conduct, Henry found a more implacable adversary in a young relation whom he had befriended, Reginald Pole, son of Margaret Plantagenet, Countess of Salisbury, and great-grandson of the famous Earl of Warwick. The king appointed the countess to preside over his daughter's household, and having educated Reginald for the church, offered to make him Archbishop of York if he would sanction the divorce. This Pole repeatedly refused; he continued for several years on the Continent, and was made a cardinal. Henry nevertheless testified kind feeling until the appearance of a book on the 'Unity of the Church,' in which Pole used the strongest invectives against him. Deploring the emperor's laxity, Pole urged the Pope to issue his bull without delay, declaring Henry the wickedest of men, who had broken his coronation oath and forfeited his crown, and that it was the duty of England to rebel. This book was sent to England, upon which Pole was summoned to appear and explain himself, but the cardinal declined. The danger that England would become Protestant, as predicted in this book, was indeed imminent. In spite of the occasional punishment of heretics, said Pole, 'that seed is sown in England, thick and broad, and by the sovereign's hands. It is sown and it is quickening, and the growing blade is defended by the sword.'³

The translation of the Scriptures had exercised its influence in the country already, although sternly discountenanced by the bishops. At length Henry expressed his desire that the work should be completed, and, to Cranmer's great joy, the first complete copy of the English Bible was published in 1536, and dedicated to the king. Orders were given that in every parish the clergyman should provide the book, both in Latin and English, and that all men should be encouraged to read therein. William Tyndal, however, by whose ability the great work had been mainly effected, an exile in Flanders, underwent this very year a violent but obscure death, a martyr to the

¹ Lingard, vi. 262. Froude, i. 371; ii. 498.

² Froude, iii. 21.

³ Froude, iii. 33, 30, 42.

great cause.¹ The Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments had been lately published in English, and directions were sent to schoolmasters and heads of houses that all children and servants should be instructed in them. Cromwell, who had for some time filled the offices of the king's chief secretary and chancellor of the exchequer, was made vicar-general, with full authority in ecclesiastical affairs, and in this capacity even took precedence in Parliament of the archbishops. Although not a priest or a graduate of any university, Cromwell was addressed by the pompous title of 'Most Reverend Lord in God.' Lowly-born men had before risen to eminence in the Church, but the dictation allowed to a lay peer under such circumstances was new and offensive to the English nobles. Sweeping measures of confiscation were now passed. Latimer earnestly entreated Cromwell to spare in every county one or two religious houses for study and devotion, and special interest was felt for the nunnery of Godstow, near Oxford, against which no complaints had been made, and which was the general place of education for young ladies of rank. He pleaded also for Malvern Priory, which was noted for its hospitality. It was stated in favour of Hexham Abbey that in that district of Northumberland there was not another house within many miles' distance, and that without that abbey the country around might go to waste. In many districts the entire want of inns must have rendered the total loss of these houses of reception a real grievance.² Remonstrances were, however, unheeded, and the suppression of the smaller monasteries and other endowments poured 'a torrent of wealth upon the Crown,' applied not as Wolsey had designed, to other beneficial purposes, but in large measure to swell the fortunes of rapacious courtiers.³

It was stipulated, however, by the Act passed in this year, that the lands should still be ploughed as before. The heads of the institutions received pensions for life, and those monks or nuns who were willing to return to the world received a suitable dress and forty shillings. Many were glad of the permission, but others, who were suddenly turned loose upon society, increased the number of the discontented. Other causes at this time added to the distress, especially in the North of England. The great demand for English wool, which

¹ Froude, iii. 76, 84. The Bible was brought into use in the parish churches on August 1.

² Hallam, 'Constitutional History,' i. 76. Burnet's 'Abridgment of History of Reformation,' i. 191.

³ Hallam.

had induced the landowners to throw cornlands into pasture, occasioned the inclosure of many commons. In early times each district had been self-supporting, had raised its own corn, fed its own cattle, and produced by the industry of the women whatever manufactures were needful.

The relief of the poor had been in earlier times the especial charge of the Catholic Church, yet the number of mendicants had increased, and even in the fourteenth century the law was called in to restrain promiscuous charity. Licences were given to those who were authorised to ask alms, and stocks were set up in every village to punish lawless vagrants.¹ A more regular plan for the relief of the poor was adopted in 1525, when an Act was passed prohibiting almsgiving to beggars, on pain of the forfeiture of ten times the value of the dole, yet providing that a collection should be made for the poor in every parish. Many great grievances were complained of, and the commissioners sent to carry out the Act of Suppression were hated by the people. The clergy in the North were generally disaffected, and at the beginning of October serious disturbances commenced in Lincolnshire, where whole parishes marched forth, headed by their clergy, and the priests excited the fury of the people. The Chancellor of Lincoln, through whom Cromwell had introduced his new plans, was barbarously beaten to death, and the bishop's palace was attacked and plundered. Six demands were laid before the king. The first was for the restoration of the religious houses; another that low-born men should be removed from the Privy Council; a third, that the heretic bishops, Cranmer, Latimer, and others, with whom was named their own unpopular bishop, should be deprived and punished.

It was feared lest the rebels should march on London before a sufficient force could be collected to check them. But the counties round London and in the South were entirely loyal, and the Duke of Suffolk was prepared to march at the head of a large force, while the want of provisions soon compelled the rebels to disperse.

The king replied to the petition by first sharply rebuking those who dared to dictate to their prince. With regard to the suppression of the religious houses, it had been ordained by Act of Parliament, with the approval of all the highest in the land. Nor were the more well-conducted houses suppressed, but such only as had been proved guilty of vice and corruption. The

¹ Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' i. 80, and note; and Froude, i. 69, and ii. 447.

king then charged the people to return to their homes, leaving a hundred ringleaders to justice, by which means alone they might escape total destruction.¹ Thus in the course of a fortnight the insurrection in Lincolnshire was over. But these disturbances had scarcely been put down when the whole North began to rise. An address, copies of which were affixed to the market-crosses and church-doors of the country towns, appealed to all good Englishmen to make a stand for the Church, which was in peril, for the Commonwealth, and for their own living. From the oath by which the confederates were bound, and their banners, on which religious images were painted, the enterprise was called the 'Pilgrimage of Grace.' On October 16, the leader of the insurgents, Robert Aske, a barrister, and connected with the nobility, entered York, and invited all monks and nuns who had been dispossessed to return to their former residences. 'Though it were never so late when they returned, the friars sang matins the same night.'² No pillage was allowed, but the insurgents surrounded the residences of all the principal inhabitants, and called on every lord, knight, and gentleman to join their league, on the threat of destroying their farms in case of refusal.

On the first news of these commotions, the king wrote to Lord Darcy, an old military nobleman of good reputation, who opposed the Reformation, urging him and 'all true men' to do their duty in suppressing the insurrection. But Lord Darcy had no intention of opposing the insurgents; he pleaded inability to withstand 60,000 men in arms, and awaited the arrival of the confederates at Pontefract Castle. On the 20th, the castle surrendered to Aske, and Lord Darcy, the Archbishop of York, and all within the walls, were sworn allies to the confederation. So completely, in fact, was Yorkshire involved in disaffection, that Skipton Castle alone held out for the Crown.

On the side of order, the Duke of Norfolk joined the Earl of Shrewsbury, at Doncaster, with such forces as he could collect. The king had desired him 'by all means to avoid a battle, unless with a certainty of victory,' and a herald was sent to Pontefract bearing a royal proclamation to be read at the market-cross. The herald met crowds of country people, who, when questioned why they were in arms, replied that it was to defend Holy Church from destruction, and their food and cattle from taxation. The herald assured them that they

¹ See extract from Henry VIII. to the rebels in Lincolnshire. State Papers—Froude, iii. 116.

² Letter from Earl of Oxford to Cromwell, cited by Mr. Froude, iii. 133.

were deluded, but he was arrested and prevented from reading the king's proclamation.

With the exception of Lord Northumberland, who was dying, and three others, all the northern nobility had joined the league. Willingly or not, six peers, or eldest sons of peers, joined Aske at Pontefract. Such a gathering had not been seen in England since the grandfathers of these same men fought on Towton Moor, when York prevailed over Lancaster.¹ The rebel host now advanced to Doncaster, where lay Norfolk and Shrewsbury at the head of their smaller force. For two days the armies watched each other. The insurgents professed loyalty, and declared their wish to free the king from low-born advisers, and to restore the influence of the nobility. They shrank from attacking an army commanded by the natural head of the Catholic party. In this perplexity a conference was held, at which it was agreed that two knights should carry the insurgents' petition to the king, under escort of the Duke of Norfolk. The duke so far sympathised with the rebel leaders as to believe that the king might be induced by their petition, at this formidable crisis, to modify his measures, possibly even to sacrifice Cromwell and the heretical bishops. Henry received the deputies graciously, detained them a fortnight, and by their aid distributed private letters among the insurgent leaders, imploring them to return to their allegiance. But he refused to rescind measures which he declared to be wholesome and beneficial. By the greatest exertions the king secured the promise of 50,000 men ready to serve, and sent heralds into the northern towns to denounce the falsehood of the representations by which the people had been excited to rebellion. But so great an excitement could not be quickly appeased; separate local insurrections took place, and the monks were everywhere replaced in the abbeys. The news of this insurrection awakened the greatest interest at Rome. Pole was appointed the Pope's legate in Flanders, with instructions to supply the leaders in the North of England with money, and to gain for them the alliance of foreign powers. The cardinal had revealed his true character.²

It was not till February that the king was informed of the final flight of the insurgents after proclamation of martial law in the northern counties. The obstinacy of the rebellion had greatly incensed him, particularly with 'those persons that call themselves religious,' and he desired that 'dreadful execution' should be made.

¹ Froude, iii. 151.

² Lingard, vi. 261.

Seventy-four persons, laity and clergy, were hanged in towns of Westmoreland and Cumberland. The trials of the leaders and great men involved in the rising succeeded. Lord Darcy suffered in June upon Tower Hill. When under examination he turned to Cromwell, calling him the chief cause of the rebellion, and prophesied that he would meet a like fate. Numerous were now the executions; Sir John Bulmer was hanged, and Lady Bulmer, according to the dreadful doom then awarded to *female* treason, was burned in Smithfield, 'the world thinking no more' of her fate than it would have done 'had she been a mere Protestant heretic.'¹ Robert Aske was drawn on a hurdle to execution in York, greatly grieving for the number of lives which he had led to destruction. Reginald Pole meanwhile was murmuring over his baffled plot, yet in the fervent hope of better times to come. His secret messengers were passing from Liège to his mother and her family in England. Before his day of exaltation arrived they had suffered the penalty of his aspirations.²

The joy occasioned by the defeat of the insurrection would have been incomplete without the happy birth of an heir to the crown, so long and passionately desired. The succession was apparently secure, and the Protestants rejoiced; but eleven days afterwards the joy was overclouded, for the queen caught cold and died. The minute directions given for the infant prince's nurture show an extreme anxiety. Should the king die during the infancy of this child, his natural protectors must be looked for in the family of his mother; and Sir Edward Seymour, brother of Queen Jane, was raised to the title of Earl of Hertford, Sir William Fitzwilliam to that of Earl of Southampton, Sir John Russell to that of Lord Russell, as his natural advisers, upon whom the king could rely. Numerous letters of this period, which have been unearthed of late among the State Papers, give sufficient proof that the abuses of the monastic institutions had been so great as to make their demolition a national benefit. In some cases the superiors willingly accepted their fate. The destruction of shrines followed, and that of various images by which the people had been deluded. An image at Boxley, in Kent, to which numerous pilgrims resorted, was believed to be under supernatural influence. The eyes were seen to move, the forehead to frown, the body bowed; it seemed as if going to speak. A commissioner who had been appointed looked at the back of the figure and discovered the machinery by which it was moved. The 'Rood of Boxley' was carried to Maidstone on a market-

¹ Frodoe, &c.² Ib. 227.

day, and the trickery was laid bare in sight of the indignant people. So curious an example of contrivance was thought worth exhibiting to the king, and after it had performed before the court it was destroyed at St. Paul's Cross. Whilst the objects of the past devotion were thus brought to London as dishonoured lumber, we might have trusted that the burning of the living for conscientious differences would cease. But it was not so. Friar Forest had upheld the Pope's supremacy, and had called the late Bishop of Rochester a martyr. A denial of the royal supremacy was in this case called heresy, and for this, at the end of May, 1538, he was cruelly put to death by fire after a sermon from Latimer, in which he entreated him to recant. The Dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk, Cromwell, and other men of rank, were present with a pardon if the victim would at last recant, but the friar refused to hearken to any other doctrine than that which he had 'learnt as a child.'

Nearly three hundred and seventy years had elapsed since the murder of Becket had first attracted a crowd of pilgrims to visit his shrine at Canterbury. When Henry VIII. met Charles V., before they repaired to the celebrated meeting at Guisnes, they both paid their devotions at this hallowed spot; and the eve of the festival of St. Thomas, the anniversary of the day when Becket's remains were there deposited, had been rigidly kept as a fast by the English Church. Now, however, Cranmer announced his suspicion that imposture was practised in the display of the imputed relics at Canterbury. We may believe that Henry was not unwilling to degrade a saint who had defied a monarch. The bones which had been so long revered were burnt; the golden plating of the shrine, the costly jewels, the offerings brought by thousands of pilgrims year by year, were packed in chests and sent to the treasury. Becket's name was erased from the service-books, the church windows on which his history was painted were broken, and an official narrative was published by the government to correct the prevalent belief concerning him, describing him as having been a 'traitor to the State, who perished in a scuffle provoked by his own violence.'² The desecration of a shrine which was considered one of the

¹ Froude, iii. 295-297. Many persons had suffered as guilty of treason when they denied Henry's supremacy, but in this case alone the condemnation was for heresy, which was defined to be 'that which is against Scripture.'

² Froude, iii. 302. A story was generally credited on the Continent that 'the late archbishop' was formally cited to appear in court, had counsel assigned him, and was found guilty of treason and rebellion. Mr. Froude gives reason for doubting this story, although it was alluded to in the next bull issued by the Pope.

holiest spots of Christendom appalled the Catholic world, we are told, even more than the executions of More and Fisher.¹ It was well known to the English government that Cardinal Pole was still engaged in treasonable plots, and suspicion pointed towards the Marquis of Exeter, who, as the grandson of Edward IV., was the next lineal successor to the throne after the Tudor family. Moreover, Lord Exeter, the Poles, and the Nevilles had intermarried, and were believed to make common cause. There was danger, so it was believed, of a fresh 'Pilgrimage of Grace' with a Plantagenet for its leader. A man was arrested on suspicion of carrying letters between Cardinal Pole and his friends. To save his life, Sir Geoffrey Pole, the cardinal's younger brother, immediately offered to betray the secrets of his family. Suspicion became certainty when Sir Geoffrey deposed before the Privy Council that he, with Lord Montague, the Marquis and Marchioness of Exeter, Sir Edward Neville, and others, were in treasonable correspondence with the cardinal. On this evidence, Lord and Lady Exeter, Montague, and Neville were sent to the Tower. On searching the rooms of Lady Salisbury, letters and papers were found which deeply implicated her. Again the peers met in Westminster Hall to try two of the noblest of their order. Henry 'was never known to pardon a convicted traitor of noble blood,' and the evidence of Sir Geoffrey Pole was enough. After the execution, which took place on Tower Hill on December 9, the Marquis was degraded from the Order of the Garter. Just as this plot was made known, the Pope launched his long-deferred bull of deposition against Henry, as 'the monstrous king who had added crime to crime, killing priests, and profaning the sepulchres of the dead.'

Reginald Pole had re-written and printed his book against the king; and it was dispersed throughout Christendom.² The Earl of Desmond had even offered Ireland to the Pope, if thirty thousand Spaniards could be landed to hold it. But the plot was discovered before it was ripe, and although the cardinal remained in safety, 'his nearest kindred and dearest friends were buried in the ruins.'³ We may wonder that in this busy autumn Henry should have found either leisure or inclination

¹ 'It was the most decided step, next to the renunciation of the papal supremacy, which had as yet been taken.' Dr. Hook describes the charge of 'treason,' which he believes to have been brought against Becket at Canterbury, 'by the royal pursuivant before the shrine was demolished, and repeated for thirty days' (ii. 16).

² Lingard does not allow that Pole's book was published until after Henry's death, although it had been conveyed to the king himself. See vi. 258, note; but we may here confide in Froude's accuracy, iii. 307.

³ Froude, iii. 316.

to conduct a trial for heresy against John Lambert, or Nicholson, one of the Christian Brotherhood, formerly a companion of Tyndal, and probably concerned in his translation of the Bible. This man had denied 'the real presence;' he was tried in the archbishop's court, and being condemned, appealed to the king.

Henry, never reluctant to take part in theological debates, and secure of an admiring audience, at once decided to hear the cause in person, and on November 16, just after the Marquis of Exeter's arrest, the court opened in Westminster Hall, the whole peerage of England taking their places on each side of the throne, with the twelve judges on raised benches. Before this audience the prisoner was brought in, and then Henry entered, 'clothed all in white,' with the yeomen of the guard. The Bishop of Carlisle opened the case by declaring that the king, in putting down the usurpations of the Bishop of Rome, had not given licence to heresy. They had not met to discuss doctrines, but to try a person accused of what, according to the laws of the Church and the country, was a crime. The king began the examination, and next desired Cranmer to convince the prisoner of his error. The archbishop was followed by nine other prelates, whose arguments lasted beyond the light of day. 'After all these labours taken with you, are you yet not satisfied?' asked the king. 'Choose, will you live or die?' 'I submit myself to the will of your majesty,' replied Lambert. Yet, as the honest man did not acknowledge the truth of the episcopal reasoning, but appealed to the king's clemency, the appeal was rejected, the king declaring that he would be 'no patron of heretics.'¹ The martyr died, as usual, with great constancy.

The next spring opened with apprehensions of an invasion by the emperor. A large fleet was preparing at Antwerp, which was thought to be intended for England. But the enterprise was abandoned; the emperor found in the speedy extinction of Exeter's conspiracy a proof that Henry's power could not be easily broken. The king went, however, to the coast to survey the fortifications, and in May there was a grand military review in London, when the lord mayor and aldermen rode in white armour, and the richer citizens appeared in white silk with breastplates studded with silver.

The Parliament, which met in 1539, had important matters for consideration. The king signified his disappointment that

¹ Mr. Froude calls this celebrated trial 'an affair of vast public moment' (iii. 341).

religious differences increased in spite of restraint, and that the Bibles which lay open in all parish churches became the text-books of rival preachers. Surely, he declared, this should be amended. A committee of the Upper House having been appointed, an open debate took place in both Houses concerning the six principal articles affecting the Sacrament, the celibacy of the clergy, and auricular confession, the king himself taking part in the debate.

On the plea of bringing all 'to live peaceably together, as good and Christian men ought to do,'¹ a penal statute of especial cruelty was passed, the rigour of which has been ascribed to Gardiner. In spite of Cranmer's opposition, and with the approbation of the House of Lords, it was decreed that anyone denying the doctrine of the real presence should suffer death by burning, that all marriages made by priests were void, that to refuse to go to confession was felony. 'On every road on which the free mind of man was moving, the dark sentinel of orthodoxy was stationed with its flaming sword.'²

The learned German reformer Melancthon sent to Henry an indignant protest against this barbarous decree. Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, and Shaxton, Bishop of Salisbury, resigned their sees, and Cranmer sent back to Germany the wife whom he had married some years before, when in that country. The teachers of the reformed doctrines saw no safety but in silence.

The country had been for some time desirous that the king should marry again. A negotiation for the niece of Charles V. having failed, Cromwell urged forward an alliance between Henry and Anne, the daughter of the Duke of Cleves, the sister-in-law of the Protestant Elector of Saxony.

To allay the fears of German Protestants, it was declared that the king's moderation would modify 'the sharpness of the Six Articles.'

Cromwell, who had for some time carried on a secret correspondence with the Lutheran princes of Germany, hoped thus to cement a strong Protestant union, which might nullify the influence of the Popish peers. Unhappily, the princess was neither beautiful nor accomplished; in fact, the flattering report of emissaries and the too beautiful picture of Hans Holbein only ensured the greater disappointment on her arrival. After a fortnight's delay at Calais, owing to bad weather, the Lady

¹ Henry's address to the people.—Froude, iii. 394.

² Froude, p. 402. The author declares that the severity of the Act much exceeded the king's intention.

Anne arrived in England on December 27, and was received during a winter storm on Barham Down by Cranmer and five other bishops, who were waiting in anxious expectation. Henry came to meet her at Rochester; neither he nor Lady Anne could understand each other's language, and the result was complete disappointment. The marriage took place, notwithstanding, on January 6, and although no fault was imputed to Anne, the general sympathy justified Henry, whose dislike soon increased to aversion.

After a few months, Henry resolved upon a divorce; and Anne prudently offered no opposition. Both the king and his ministers shrank from the stigma which had attended his divorce from his first wife, and determined to use the greatest caution. It was convenient to find a pretext for divorce in a former contract of marriage between the Lady Anne and the Marquis of Lorraine. The chancellor addressed Parliament on the subject, the clergy were assembled, and when the impending change was communicated to the queen she wrote both to the king and to her brother with her acquiescence. Henry desired that she should remain in England, and estates of the value of nearly £3,000 per annum were assigned her.¹

Whilst these measures were pending, the great influential minister, Cromwell, who had been lately created Earl of Essex, was a prisoner in the Tower. Henry's disappointment in his recent marriage had alienated him from Cromwell; the exasperation of party spirit contributed to that statesman's fall. The French ambassador, writing from London on June 1, had anticipated Cromwell's triumph, and that Latimer would regain his bishopric.

'The state of religion,' wrote Marillac, 'continues most unfortunate. The bishops are divided and hate one another. The people know not what to believe, for those who are inclined to the reformed faith are called heretics, those who adhere to the old faith are charged with papistry and treason. Anything passes for high treason now.'² For a time Cromwell had made friends and satisfied the king. Many had benefited by the suppression of the monasteries. 'The king had money for his pleasures; the courtiers were enriched, the abbots and leading monks were satisfied with their pensions; but the treasury was exhausted. The monastic property had gone, no one knew

¹ She survived the king, and died at Chelsea in 1557. An Act was passed declaring those guilty of treason who should call this a valid marriage.

² 'The Pilgrim,' pp. 142, 143.

where or how.¹ 'When the measures of a minister became unpopular, the king—whose desire for popularity was a passion—sought to save himself by casting his servant upon the troubled waters.' 'No wonder,' says the Church historian Fuller, 'if this Samson knocking down the pillars of the Romish Church had the rest of the structure fall upon him.' Suddenly rising at the council-board on June 10, the Duke of Norfolk said, 'My Lord of Essex, I arrest you of high treason.' Lord Essex was immediately taken to the Tower, where, in the condemned cells, were already three Catholics for whose sentence he was answerable; three Protestants soon followed, whom Cromwell's fall left exposed to their enemies. There, by most unpitied, hated by the nobility and clergy, and also generally by the people, he awaited his doom during six weeks. He was condemned under the iniquitous statute which admitted of attainder without trial.² The chief allegations brought against him were that he had set at liberty persons convicted or suspected of treason, without the king's permission; that he had issued commissions by his sole authority, had encouraged heresy by disseminating unauthorised books, and had generally protected heretics.

The king who passed the 'Six Articles' was not likely to pardon the vice-gerent who had so far interfered with his prerogative. The statesman who first suggested to Henry that he might dispense with the Pope's authority was inevitably hateful to the Roman Catholic party, and the old nobility looked upon him with aversion as an upstart adventurer. His enemies now prevailed; the prediction which Lord Darcy had uttered against him after the defeat of the northern insurrection was realised, and on July 28, the minister whose power and ability had rendered him during the last eight years almost supreme passed from the Tower to the scaffold.

Unfortunately for Cromwell, proofs had been found among his papers that he had carried on a secret correspondence with the Lutheran princes of Germany, an act which Henry could not pardon.

A bride was soon found for the king in the young and beautiful Catherine, daughter of Lord Edward Howard, a niece of the Duke of Norfolk. This connexion tended apparently towards Catholic ascendancy, but the Romanists had little reason to rejoice. Two days after Cromwell's execution, the Council issued orders that three men should be burnt at the stake for

¹ Introductory chapter to Dr. Hook's 'Lives of the Archbishops,' 'Reformation Period,' p. 136.

² Dr. Hook's 'Lives,' ii. 87.

heresy, and that at the same time three Romanists should be executed as traitors. They were drawn on the same hurdle to execution. This revolting spectacle is said to have nearly occasioned disturbances in London. The French ambassador described it as equally painful and monstrous. Policy forbade the repetition of such scenes.

There was still one prisoner in the Tower in favour of whom age and sex might have pleaded—the aged Countess of Salisbury, mother of Cardinal Pole. Lord Cromwell had displayed a tunic of white silk in the House of Lords, on which a Catholic badge and the royal arms were embroidered, similar to those worn by the northern insurgents, which had been discovered among Lady Salisbury's linen. The rashness of her friends induced further suspicion. In April, 1541, Sir John Neville, and a few knights, priests, and others, rose in rebellion in Yorkshire. The movement was quickly suppressed, and Neville, with five others, was tried and executed. There was then but one punishment for state offences; but it is now impossible to assign any valid reason why it was determined that on the same day the grey head of Margaret Plantagenet, the aged countess, should fall.¹

Cromwell, in the last year of his administration, had procured the enactment of several useful measures for the redress of grievances, and it was now for the first time legal to bequeath land by a written will. Before this was allowed, it had been customary to charge 'the use' of the land with payments for the benefit of the daughters and younger sons, by which the heir was frequently much encumbered. The 'Statute of Uses,' passed in the 27th year of this reign, checked this custom, but excited great irritation among younger brothers, and it now became indispensable to allow a proprietor to bequeath at least some portion of his lands.² Those who held by military tenure were allowed to dispose of two-thirds.

A further check, yet not an entire prohibition, was imposed on the privilege of taking sanctuary in religious buildings, and monks who had been relieved from their vows were permitted to buy or inherit property.

The Court was now the scene of another domestic tragedy. The first year of Henry's marriage with Catherine Howard seems to have been untroubled and happy, but proofs of the young queen's immorality submitted to Cranmer were said to

¹ Lingard, vi. 200; Froude, iv. 119.

² Froude, iii. 418, 484, 486. To prevent disputes in titles, possession during sixty years was declared to give the holder a legal right to property.

warrant him in recommending a divorce. The Duchess of Norfolk and her daughter the Countess of Bridgewater, Lord William Howard, and other persons of inferior rank, were also committed to the Tower on the charge of having concealed knowledge of Catherine's guilt. The unfortunate queen was sent to Sion House, and the king's vengeance fell first on the supposed instigators of her conduct. But although her execution was deferred, it soon followed the act of attainder, now passed by Parliament; she was taken to the Tower, and beheaded on February 13, 1542.

It might have been expected that the experience of five marriages, of two queens divorced without fault, two beheaded, one only having died from a natural cause, might alike have disinclined Henry to renew the obligation, and have discouraged the ladies from acquiring eminence at so great a risk. But in July, 1543, when he had been more than a year a widower, Henry raised Catherine Parr, the widow of the Lord Latimer who had been implicated in the northern insurrection, to be his partner on the throne. The connexion appears extraordinary, for Catherine was known to be a partisan of those opinions which the king had so severely punished, and her presumption in not only reading the prohibited works, but expressing her opinion concerning their doctrines, is said to have brought her into great peril, from which she happily saved herself by submission and subsequent silence.

Henry's sister, Margaret, the widow of James IV., had entered into a second marriage with the Earl of Angus, the head of the House of Douglas. She had, however, formed other connexions amongst the nobles, had persecuted her husband, and brought up her son to regard him with hatred. Henry, although greatly displeased by her conduct, looked for some time with hope upon the young King of Scots, and made known his wish that he would marry his daughter, the Lady Mary, in which case James might eventually become Henry's successor on the throne of England. Overtures were made for a meeting at York. Could that have taken place, had a marriage been so arranged, there might have been no divorce between Henry and his first wife, perhaps no breach with Rome!¹

But Scottish intrigues had a counter-influence, and while Henry and the Pope were hostile powers, the young James V. found a bride first in the French Princess Magdalen, and, after her premature death, in Mary of Guise, the widowed Duchess de Longueville, who landed in Scotland in June, 1538. Mary

¹ Froude, iv. 44.

of Guise was devotedly Catholic, and became, with her partisan Beton, Archbishop of St. Andrew's, the chief director of the affairs of Scotland. When Reginald Pole received his commission from the Pope against Henry, a consecrated cap and sword were assigned to James V., but the excommunication and the preparations against England had exploded in vapour.¹ In 1541 the Pope was to the English 'a name of the past,' and even James of Scotland, although swayed by different influences, felt some respect for his uncle's success. But the influence of Cardinal Beton and the queen bound Scotland to France and the Papacy.² Protestants were persecuted in Scotland, enjoying the less favour and greater enmity as being the allies of the English. Countries obtain frequently a political importance to which their mere extent would give them small claim. Thus, in the sixteenth century, under the ban of the Pope, and divided by faction, England could yet defy the hostility of continental nations, and France strained every nerve to prevent her union with Scotland.³

The borders of England and Scotland were continually wasted by incursions. In August, 1542, Sir Robert Bowes crossed the Marches in pursuit, fell into an ambuscade at Halydon Rigg, and was taken prisoner with many other Englishmen. James was elated with what was magnified to France as an important victory, and war with England was now inevitable. Henry published a long manifesto, setting forth that his present hostility was not based on a demand of the old feudal superiority, but was provoked by many acts of aggression; and commanded the Duke of Norfolk to invade the Lowlands. A great Border foray accordingly brought destruction on the newly gathered harvest, on farms, villages, towns, and abbeys; and, having thus wasted the country, the duke returned to England in November.

James, who had assembled large forces, longed to retaliate, but was withheld by the fears of those who dreaded that he might fall as his father had done at Flodden, or by the dissensions of his followers. The Scots, however, revenged themselves by the invasion of Cumberland, under Lord Maxwell, the Warden of the Marches. They at first surprised the English, but the Cumberland farmers quickly rallied, the Scots lost their way in the darkness, and wandered into Solway Moss, a morass

¹ Froude, iv. 53.

² David Beton succeeded his uncle as Archbishop of St. Andrew's, and was made a cardinal—one of the most able of Romanist statesmen. See his character given by Froude, iv. 212.

³ Froude, iv. 152.

between Greta and the Esk, where the greater part were either killed or taken prisoners by the English.

Next day the English leader, Sir Thomas Wharton, sent to the king a list of captives, numbering seven of the Scottish nobility and two hundred gentlemen. It was in vain that Cardinal Beton endeavoured to repair this great disaster; James felt it to be irreparable, and retired to his palace at Falkland in despair.

His two infant sons had died in the preceding year. On December 8 news came that the Queen of Scots, at Linlithgow, was the mother of a girl. Even this news did not rouse the unhappy king from his apathy, and James died on December 18. The herald sent into Scotland by the King of England had been murdered on the way. This murder added to the national disgrace. The man who was concerned in it had been an associate of Cardinal Beton, and the invasion of England which had ended so tragically was also imputed to him. Moreover, he had caused James, when nearly at the point of death, to sign a paper conferring the regency upon himself and certain other Catholic noblemen. In the pocket of the late king's dress was found a list, supposed to be drawn up by Beton, of those whom he styled heretics and favourable to England. At the head of this list was the Earl of Arran, who, as the infant princess's nearest relation, ought, according to custom, to have been her guardian. A recoil of feeling took place. Arran was declared regent; the cardinal was arrested and imprisoned, and the lead in State affairs passed from the Church to the laity.¹

The situation of Scotland now resembled that after the battle of Flodden in 1513. A great English invasion was again followed by the death of the king and the succession of an infant heir. Cardinal Beton's deposition opened the prospect of a durable peace, and now the King of England might effect that union which he had tried in vain to establish twenty years earlier. Henry invited the Scottish prisoners of rank, with the Earl of Angus and his brother, to a conference in London, and suggested that, after the signature of the treaties, the infant queen should be brought to England, that the castles of Edinburgh, Stirling, and Dumbarton should receive English garrisons, and that Scotland should be governed by a native council under his own selection.

The Scottish captives offered no opposition to these proposals. On December 31 the lord mayor gave them a banquet at the Guildhall, and on New-Year's Day, after pausing at Enfield to

¹ Froude, iv. 189, 202.

see the young prince of five years old whom their infant queen was intended to marry, they set off on their return to Scotland, dismissed by Henry with costly presents, and influenced, as he believed, not only by a desire for an alliance with their ancient foes, but also by a wish to introduce the English Bible and the Reformed opinions into Scotland.

But the links which bound France and Scotland could not be destroyed by one defeat. There was much excitement at Paris when these events became known, and the greatest readiness was expressed to go to the assistance of Mary of Guise and to withdraw her infant daughter from the snares of her enemies. Had not the harbour at Leith been frozen, the Duke of Guise would have embarked immediately for Scotland. Meantime the cardinal did what he could. Although in prison, he drew up letters of interdict for the whole of Scotland. Copies were distributed among the clergy, by whom they were obeyed. The Regent Arran allowed the 'gospellers' to preach, but, under the cardinal's injunction, no mass might be sung, no corpse buried, no child baptized, no lovers married. The estates assembled at Edinburgh, confirmed Arran's ascendancy, and resolved that ambassadors should be sent to conclude a marriage between their infant queen and the young Prince of Wales. But they refused to allow to Henry the custody and control of the young queen. They would send four hostages to England as guarantees for her future appearance, when she should arrive at a suitable age; but, for the present, Mary must remain with her mother, and be, of course, surrounded by French courtiers and Catholic priests, whose influence Henry might, if he pleased, seek to counterbalance by attaching English gentlemen and ladies to the household. Other stipulations were made in favour of the national Parliament and the perpetual ascendancy of the family of Arran.¹ The Parliament likewise consented to the free use of the English Bible. But the Scottish people could not endure to be deprived of their accustomed observances, and Cardinal Beton was soon again secure at St. Andrew's.

Henry relinquished his demand for the infant queen; she might remain in Scotland until ten years old, but the treaties must be drawn without delay. And if treaties could bind a reluctant people, England and Scotland were so bound by the two treaties of peace and marriage to which Henry set his hand at Greenwich on July 1. During the lives of the reigning sovereigns, and for one year after the death of either, no war

¹ Froude, iv. 215.

was to be waged between England and Scotland, the friends of the one were to be the friends of the other, their enemies the same. The border country was no longer to be disturbed by marauders, but both governments engaged to assist each other in the defence of order.

But while these fair promises were written on paper, French vessels of war, for which Beton had implored, were approaching the Scottish coast. The men on board were designed either to carry off the queen, or to serve in Scotland, as Mary of Guise and the cardinal might direct. English cruisers succeeded in capturing two of these ships, and three were driven back to France.

When the cardinal assembled the Romanist lords, and appealed from the Scotch Parliament to the nation, antipathy against England proved still predominant, and the popular cry was raised for Holy Church and Independence. The Regent Arran yielded, and was received back into the Church; the cardinal had won the battle. On September 11, the infant queen was crowned at Stirling. Scotland was again the enemy of England, and must expect Henry's chastisement for her want of faith. 'Once more Scotland dared the fortune of arms, and nestled behind the shield of France.'¹

France being bound in alliance with Scotland and the Pope against England, Henry now found a new ally in the emperor, who had formerly been so much his enemy. Charles V. had striven to protect the rights of his niece, the Lady Mary. Before Henry engaged in a new campaign he caused an Act to be passed providing that, in case his son should die without heirs, the crown should descend to the Lady Mary, under conditions to be determined by his will. In case Mary died childless, the crown should pass under the same restrictions to Elizabeth. To prosecute the war against Francis with the utmost spirit, it was agreed that Henry and Charles should both invade France, in June, 1544, and meet, if possible, at Paris. The cardinal and his colleagues heard of warlike preparations being made in England, but supposed that the first attack would be made upon France.

But on May 3 a large English fleet entered the Firth of Forth. The next day was Sunday, there were still more vessels, and the English army was landing. The cardinal and Arran fled; and when the next day the English advanced on the town the corporation and townsmen prayed for terms. Lord Hertford, who commanded the English forces, reminded the

¹ Froude, iv. 243, 251.

Scots of their breach of faith, and required them to yield at discretion. With rash courage, they shut their gates in defiance. The gates were blown in, the people who attempted a defence were mown down, and the houses were soon on fire. The miserable citizens fled into the country, and for seven miles round the farms and villages were wasted. Lord Hertford designed to teach a terrible lesson of English power; he desired that no injury should be inflicted on life except where there was armed opposition, but the ruin of property was complete. By May 15, the invaders returned to England, with little loss, but the wardens of the Marches still continued the work of destruction.

The English besieged Boulogne, where, on July 14, Henry took the command in person, while the emperor was occupied in the siege of St. Dizier, on the Marne. St. Dizier capitulated after seven weeks, but Henry was still detained before Boulogne by the bravery of the garrison, till at last, on September 14, the town was taken. The emperor now entered upon secret negotiations, and determined the conditions of peace; and thus ended their joint operations in war, with much dissatisfaction on the part of the English, and a fixed determination not to relinquish Boulogne. To hold that place as a second fortress in France, or as a naval station, might be little worth the cost. But England, engaged in a mortal duel with the Papacy, could not afford to confess weakness, and the English nation felt its honour concerned in the defence and preservation of Boulogne.¹ The expenses of the war carried on both in France and Scotland had been enormous, exceeding even the last subsidy, part of which had not yet been paid into the treasury.

The Privy Council decided to postpone the meeting of Parliament and once more to exact a benevolence. The people had successfully resisted that claim during Wolsey's administration, and it was directed that no person possessing lands of less annual value than forty shillings, or with chattels of less value than fifteen pounds, should be urged to contribute. To those of the middle class it was announced that His Majesty would not be pleased to accept less than twenty-pence in the pound, on the income arising from their land. The commissioners were desired to summon only a few persons at a time, and to make use of 'good words and amiable behaviour' to each apart, and to give thanks to those who were obedient. If any one should withstand their gentle solicitations, alleging poverty or some

¹ Froude, iv. 373.

other inadmissible excuse, he was to be strictly enjoined to silence, and summoned before the Privy Council.

The severe punishment inflicted on two recusant citizens exhibits the temper of the government. Richard Reed and Sir William Roach, aldermen of London, presumed audibly to murmur. Reed was sent to the army on the Scottish border, to serve as a soldier at his own charge, a direction being sent to the commanding officer to employ him on the hardest and most perilous duty, and to subject him in garrison to the greatest privations, letting him feel 'the sharp discipline of the northern wars.' He was taken prisoner by the Scots, and was compelled to pay a ransom of much larger amount than the required 'benevolence.'

Sir William Roach was committed to prison, from which he was liberated after three months—not, probably, until he had consented to pay a considerable sum.¹ Commissioners were appointed to collect money in every county, and the sums so obtained prove a state of comparative wealth curiously different from the present. Somersetshire produced £6,707, Kent but little less; but Lancashire could only raise £660, and Cumberland less by nearly £100.

There was a large debt of long standing due from France to England, beginning with arrears to be paid to Henry's sister, when Queen-Dowager. Henry declared that he would be satisfied if Boulogne and the country adjacent were left in his hands till these arrears were paid, and provided also no further support were furnished to Scotland. Lord Surrey commanded at Boulogne during the winter of 1545-6, exposed to frequent skirmishes, and was succeeded by Lord Hertford at the head of thirty thousand men. In May a conference for peace took place at Arles. It was acknowledged that England had been drawn into the war to recover her debts, while four times that amount had been spent. 'You have well-scourged us,' replied the French commissioner; 'you have slain our people and devastated our country, and also compelled us to pay our debts, which is sufficient pain for non-payment, and a great honour to your master.'

It was agreed that Boulogne should be left in the hands of the English as a security, or till the completion of the promised payments.²

Cardinal Beton had continued to prosecute the Scottish reformers, and in January, 1546, he procured the execution,

¹ Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' i. 24, and note. Lingard, vi. 347.

² Froude, iv. 466.

under the form but without the substance of lawful trial, of George Wishart, one of their most popular preachers, at St. Andrew's. In the view of the reformers Wishart was a martyr, Beton a murderer. Civil war and anarchy had broken down the rules of law, and Wishart's friends hastened to revenge his death, obtained entrance into the castle, and murdered Beton. Although Mary of Guise and her friends maintained for some years longer the Catholic religion, the great pillar of their policy had fallen.

In England notwithstanding that in the royal chapel the mass was still administered in Latin, Henry allowed his son to be educated under Cranmer's direction. Gardiner tried his strength against Cranmer without success, and when the prebendaries of Canterbury ventured to lay an information against their archbishop, Henry issued a commission to examine 'not the accused but the accusers,' some of whom he caused to be imprisoned, and compelled them all to ask Cranmer's pardon.¹

In December, 1545, when Henry for the last time in his life made a speech in Parliament, he addressed the members with great earnestness concerning their want of true religion and disposition to wrangle over the words of Scripture. 'Of this I am sure,' said he, 'that charity was never so faint among you, and God himself, amongst Christians, was never less revered, honoured, and served. Some be too stiff in their old "Mumpsimus," others too busy and curious in their new "Sumpsimus." Alas, how can poor souls live in concord when your preachers sow debate and discord?' After earnestly admonishing that these errors be corrected, he exhorted them to 'be in charity one with another, like brother and brother.'² The king's words are said to have been spoken and listened to by many with tears, and to have created much sensation in the country; but the orthodox party had still the law of the Six Articles, and the Duke of Norfolk was supported by the new Chancellor Wriothesley. A few months afterwards, in June, 1546, the chancellor with his own hands applied the rack to the daughter of Sir William Ascue, a lady who had been seen frequently in Lincoln Cathedral reading the Bible, and who steadfastly denied the divine nature of the sacrament, declaring 'the bread' to be 'but a remembrance of Christ's death.' Her accusers tried to include

¹ Lingard, vi. 349. 'The story of Cranmer's danger and escape,' says Mr. Froude, 'is familiar to us through Shakespeare's *Henry VIII.*, act. v. The general outline is no doubt correct' (iv. 295, note).

² Two independent accounts of this speech remain. Hall appears to have been present.

Hertford, Cranmer, even the queen, as participators in her guilt, but without effect. Neither could torture extract information from her, nor the approach of death induce her to waver. Strong in her fortitude, this heroic woman perished by fire at the stake with three other heretics.¹

Henry, now declining in health, naturally sought for the firmest reliance for his youthful son. The prince was but nine years old, and the infant Queen of Scotland, through whom the king still fondly hoped to unite both parts of the island, was 'among a sort of wolves,' as he described the Scottish nobles.² He looked to the Earl of Hertford as the nobleman on whose attachment, as the uncle of his son, he could best rely, and Hertford was true to the Reformation, but hated by the old nobility, and dreaded by the Catholic party. The head of that party was the Duke of Norfolk, at one time regarded as a possible successor to the throne, should the king die without a son.³ The duke's accomplished son, the Earl of Surrey, was believed to harbour peculiar ill-will against Hertford, who had superseded him in the command of Boulogne, and he had been heard to foretell that the time of revenge might not be far distant. It was also said that one of his servants had held secret communication with Cardinal Pole in Italy.

The Earl of Surrey, the most accomplished of the young nobility, had been the favourite companion, fellow-student, and brother by marriage, of that Henry Duke of Richmond whom the king would have been well pleased to have named in the succession, after Edward. Distinguished both as a soldier and as a poet, his high qualities only awakened the king's apprehensions as to the ambition of one who might aspire to marry the Lady Mary, and as the head of the Catholic faction endanger Edward's throne. The king was apprised that Surrey had quartered the arms of Edward the Confessor on his escutcheon with a silver label, a distinction to which the king's son alone was entitled; moreover, that he had maintained himself and his father to have the first claim to be the governors of the young prince on the death of the king. On such slender grounds a charge of treasonable conspiracy was drawn up against both the Duke of Norfolk and his son. Ignorant of each other's arrest, both were conveyed to separate rooms in the Tower. The duke's houses were searched, and his personal property was seized.

¹ Froude, iv. 505.

² 'Sometimes hunting in a pack, sometimes tearing each other to pieces.'—Henry's letter to the Emperor (Froude, iv. 308).

³ To this effect, Froude refers to Giustiniani's 'Letters from the Court of Henry VIII.'—Froude, iv. 540.

After a long investigation of the servants and female connexions, whose evidence could not fail to be modified by fear or the hope of recompense, the king affirmed that there was sufficient evidence for believing that the Howards aimed at obtaining the crown; the judges agreed to an indictment for high treason, and, according to custom, despatches to that effect were sent to the ambassadors abroad. It was said in evidence that Lord Surrey had persisted in assuming those arms, although informed at the Heralds' College that he could not legally adopt them.¹

On January 13 the Earl of Surrey was arraigned as a commoner at Guildhall. To the charge respecting the arms, he made a spirited defence, explained that he had borne them long without censure, and even asserted that they had been assigned to him by the Heralds. The Court, however, decided that sufficient proof had been furnished of his aspiring to the throne, and returned a verdict of 'Guilty.' The earl was executed on January 19. It might have been supposed that the aged Duke of Norfolk would, when deprived of his son, scarcely seek to prolong his own life; but after undergoing many examinations, the duke signed a confession that he had erred in communicating to others certain royal secrets, contrary to his oath, and in concealing his son's treasonable assumption of the arms of Edward the Confessor, as well as in treasonably wearing on his own shield the arms of England with a label of silver, the right of Prince Edward.² Desirous that, in case of his death, his estate should not enrich his enemies, Norfolk also wrote requesting from the king as a favour that the 'good and stately gear' of which he was possessed might be settled on Prince Edward and his heirs. Henry assented to this petition, but did not stop the proceedings against the duke. A bill of attainder founded on the duke's confession was brought into Parliament. The king's illness had meantime increased, so far as to render it impossible for him to give his assent in person. Certain lords were appointed to act in his name, and on January 27 the lieutenant of the Tower received orders to bring the duke to execution on the following morning.

That 27th day of January, Henry, whose own life was fast sinking, spent, we are told, in earnest conversation with Lord

¹ Mr. Froude gives reasons for supposing that the earl intended on the king's death to claim the supreme power, either for his father or himself.

² It is said by a member of the Howard family that the ancestors of the Duke of Norfolk had borne these arms from the time of Thomas of Brotherton, son of Edward I.—See Lingard, vi. 362, note.

Hertford and Sir William Paget on the condition of England. He urged them to promote the marriage of his heir to the infant Queen of Scots in order that the crowns might be united, and he sent messages anxiously commending Edward to the care of the rival sovereigns, Charles V. and Francis I. So long as Henry could speak, he continued these instructions.¹ If he thought at all of that noble prisoner in the Tower who had been so many years devoted to his service, it was perhaps to feel that by his removal the head of a faction was withdrawn, and the path made more easy for those to whom he entrusted his son. But before the sun rose on January 28, Henry had ceased to breathe. The execution was suspended, and the duke's life was saved, although for some years he remained in prison. The extent of the king's danger and the exact time of his death were concealed from the public. While the earl hastened to Hertford, where Edward was residing with Elizabeth, Parliament, still ignorant of the great event, met for business as usual, and it was not till the 31st that the lord chancellor officially announced the monarch's death. He then read an extract from the royal will respecting the government to be carried on during the young king's minority, declared Parliament dissolved, and invited the Lords to pay their respects. Edward had been brought to the Tower to be proclaimed Edward VI., King of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and of the Church of England. Thus the title which the Pope had conferred on Henry as the orthodox opponent of Luther, was perpetuated for one who, as the head of an independent Church, defied the papal authority. It was the first time that the proclamation announced an English sovereign to be also King of Ireland, of which he had been previously styled 'Lord.'²

When Henry ascended the throne, the English ascendancy was chiefly confined to a portion of Dublin, besides four adjacent counties, and the principal sea-ports; the other parts of the island were under the distracted rule of a number of petty chiefs, the greater number of whom were of Irish origin. For two years the Duke of Norfolk, then Earl of Surrey, successfully overawed these petty despots; but when he was called to the command of the army in the war with France, Ireland was again exposed to the evils of perpetual conflicts between rival chiefs, the Butlers and Fitzgeralds. When Henry in 1534 caused Lord Kildare to be imprisoned on account of his excesses, his son, Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, at the head of a hundred and

¹ Froude, v. 2.

² Lingard, vi. 326.

forty followers, dared to declare war against the King of England, sent an agent to the Emperor, asking his assistance against the criminal husband of Queen Catherine, and wrote to the Pope offering to hold the crown of Ireland as his liege-man, and pay a yearly tribute. No sane body of men could support this wild young nobleman in his pretensions, and after a few months Fitzgerald sailed to England to supplicate pardon from Henry. He was sent to the Tower, and in the following year beheaded, together with five of his family, who had been seized in Ireland by stratagem, all being convicted by the act of attainder passed by the English Parliament.

The papal authority was abolished, and Henry was declared head of the Irish Church.¹ In 1542, Ireland was raised from a lordship to the higher rank of a kingdom, and measures were taken for the administration of justice in Connaught and Munster, the least civilised parts of the island. Peerages were granted to some of the Irish chieftains who had hitherto aspired to independence; and never, since Henry II. invaded Ireland, did its condition appear so promising as during the last years of Henry VIII.

Salutary changes had also been made in Wales, the native province of the Tudors, a part only of which had previously been subjected to English law. The government of the wilder portions had remained in the hands of Lords of the Marches, by whom they had been subdued, and who had their separate courts, judges, and officers, and punished or pardoned offenders at their pleasure. Atrocious criminals sometimes escaped from justice when jurisdiction was thus divided, and the advantage was considerable when, in 1536, it was enacted that Wales should thenceforth be under the same laws as England; one borough in each county, with only one exception, returning members to Parliament.

There must surely have been many besides the friends of the Duke of Norfolk who rejoiced in the termination of a reign in which, as acknowledged even by the most favourable historian, 'the laws had been severe beyond precedent, and even speech was criminal.'² But the language of the contemporary writers leads us to believe that Henry's popularity, which had been so great at his accession, was not entirely effaced even

¹ The two races of settlers are said to have combined in their disapprobation of the change of religion. Lord Grey, the king's deputy, succeeded in putting down revolt, but was related to the Fitzgeralds, and was himself accused of disaffection. He asked leave to return, was thrown into the Tower, and shortly afterwards beheaded.—Lingard, p. 326.

² Froude, v. 3.

by so many acts of cruelty.¹ In early life he had, says Fuller, 'a beautiful person and majestic presence, so that his picture was known at first sight.' Latterly he became, through self-indulgence, bloated and unwieldy. Like his father, he viewed with an evil eye every remote descendant of the Plantagenets, and took advantage of the slightest pretext to remove those whom his jealousy represented as possible rivals to himself or his heir. When not provoked he was affable, and his temper has been called generous. He was willing to conciliate the people when they complained of Wolsey's exactions; and his iron rule fell chiefly on the nobles whom he dreaded, and on heretics who had the presumption to deny his supremacy or to be unconvinced by his reasoning. The great number of letters which remain, written by him or addressed to him, testify to his application to the cares of government.² 'The majestic lord who broke the bonds of Rome,'³ he yet deserved no praise from the friends of religious liberty when he passed 'the Six Articles,' enabling him alike to burn Lutherans as heretics and to hang Catholics as traitors—the former for denying the doctrines of Rome, the latter for asserting the supremacy of the Pope. Shortly before his death, Henry endowed Trinity College at Cambridge, and gave the church of the Grey Friars and St. Bartholomew's Hospital to the City of London.

At a time when there was no standing army it was needful that an occasional muster should be made of all the lancers and light horsemen in every county, and in the thirty-third year of this reign an Act passed by which owners of land, whether peers or commoners, were required to keep a certain number of horses of a given size; and it was further enacted that any person whose wife wore a French hood, or velvet bonnet, or ornaments of gold or jewels, should maintain one trotting horse, on pain of forfeiting ten pounds. Several statutes prohibited the exportation of horses.⁴ Since the cessation of the civil war, England had been rapidly increasing in wealth, and several reports testify to the degree of respect paid to the lord mayor and the merchants of London. The number of the nobility was small, and their power was effectually broken. It struck the Venetian

¹ If Henry had died previous to the agitation of the divorce, his loss would have been deplored as one of the heaviest misfortunes which had ever befallen the country.—Froude, i. chap. ii., towards the end.

² 'His state papers and letters may be compared with those of Wolsey or of Cromwell: the perception is equally clear, the expression equally powerful.'—Froude's History, ii., near the end; Lingard, vi. 164; Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' i. 22.

³ Gray's 'Installation Ode.'

⁴ See 'Life of Sir Christopher Hatton,' p. 340.

envoys who came to England with surprise, to find that the Peers had no jurisdiction in the places from which they derived their titles, and that all writs were made in the king's name. Unaccustomed to one general administration of the law, they thought this an encroachment on the rights of the nobility.¹ Henry was accustomed to much adulation, and when, as was usual during his presence in the House of Lords, the chancellor or other leading minister spoke of his 'sacred majesty,' the Lords immediately rose and bowed profoundly to the throne. But it was in this reign that the House of Commons was first raised above the narrow duty of voting supplies; indeed, when Henry ascended the throne the Commons cared so little for their privileges that their attendance was enforced by law.

'They woke into life in 1529, and they became the right hand of the king.' From this time the House of Commons began to absorb within the range of its action business of every description from the least to the most important of the State.²

¹ See No. 192 of the 'Quarterly Review.'

² Froude, iv. 539.

CHAPTER XXIV.

EDWARD VI.

A.D. 1547-1553.

THE son of Henry VIII. and his third queen, Jane Seymour, was not ten years of age at the time of his father's death in January, 1547. According to ancient usage, it behoved the House of Lords to appoint a regent, but Henry had been entrusted with the power of nominating a council of sixteen to exercise authority until his son should complete his eighteenth year. Among so large a number, few only could wield the real power of government; and the names of Cranmer, of Edward's uncle Seymour, Earl of Hertford, and of Wriothesley, the lord chancellor, were foremost on the list of those called by the late king his 'executors.' The Earl of Hertford immediately aspired to be styled the Protector of the Realm and the governor of his royal nephew, while the chancellor, who inclined to the Popish party, alone opposed his pretensions.

Wriothesley spoke earnestly of the dangers which attended Protectorates. Few persons then living could remember the wicked Duke of Gloucester who, sixty-four years earlier, had assumed the title of 'Protector' of the hapless Edward. In the more peaceable times which had succeeded, the youthful sovereign was far less exposed to personal danger than would be any ambitious subject who might make himself too prominent.

The council bestowed additional titles on several peers. The Protector became Duke of Somerset, his brother, Sir Thomas Seymour, was appointed High Admiral, with the title of Lord Seymour; Dudley Lord Lisle, who was one of the executors, was made Earl of Warwick, and Wriothesley Earl of Southampton. The duke's appointment as Protector was hailed with general satisfaction by the Protestant party.

Although Henry had been in his latter years, to use Burnet's words, 'swimming between two persuasions,' his son had been placed under Protestant tutors, and the king's uncles adhered to the party of 'the New Learning.' It was natural that Henry should avoid placing his son under the care of those who had only admitted his supremacy in the Church through fear, and who would willingly have considered the Lady Mary as the sole legitimate heir of the crown. Archbishop Cranmer, Edward's godfather at his christening, officiated at his coronation on February 20. The ceremony was shortened, and the old form of presenting the king to the people, as if for their choice, was omitted.¹ Cranmer in a short address alluded to the change in religion. It had been, he said, usual for the Bishops of Canterbury at the coronation to anoint the king with oil; but the royal authority was the gift of God, and independent of the priesthood, and the use of the oil was a mere ceremony. He exhorted Edward to reward virtue and punish sin, setting before him the example of King Josiah.

The Duke of Somerset gladly took advantage of an error made by the lord chancellor in granting a commission, and, with the concurrence of the judges and the council, deprived him of his office. Being thus rid of his most formidable opponent, Somerset became the political chief. The other 'executors' designed by Henry were legally his advisers, but only seven signed his new commission, which was drawn in Edward's name, the remainder thus silently protesting against the extent of his power. Somerset had suppressed part of the late king's will, but he was well inclined to promote Henry's policy of uniting the two kingdoms under one sovereign by the marriage of Edward to the young Queen of Scots.

This design had been favoured by the Scottish Assembly in 1543, but the influence of France had since intervened, while the country was torn by religious dissensions. Francis I., King of France, died two months after his rival Henry VIII. His successor, Henry II., was eager to renew the ancient alliance with Scotland, and promised French aid towards subduing that disaffected party of Scottish Protestants with whom the Protector allied himself. One of the duke's first acts was to warn the bishops that their authority was derived entirely from the Crown. This was willingly acknowledged by Cranmer. Relieved

¹ Lingard and Hallam have called attention to this change. 'A curious proof,' says the latter, 'of the solicitude displayed by the Tudors, as it was much more by the next family, to suppress every recollection that could make their sovereign appear to be of popular origin.'—'Constitutional History,' i. 37, note.

from the fear inspired by his late despotic sovereign, he now opened his doors to the German reformers who arrived in England, and in parishes where Protestantism prevailed there ensued an immediate destruction of images and painted glass. Whitewash was frequently spread over paintings which were looked upon as superstitious, and some preachers violently denounced the custom of keeping fasts and holidays. Gardiner, who remained Bishop of Winchester, although known to be a Romanist, entreated Somerset 'not to trouble the realm with novelties in religion,' at least during the king's childhood. But the work of reformation was pressed forward. In the May after the late king's death, a royal visitation was ordered to inquire throughout England how far the English Liturgy had been adopted, the Pope's authority disclaimed, and superstitious practices discontinued. A book of Homilies was published under Cromwell's direction, to be read in every parish church. Customs interwoven with the usages of common life could not be rudely torn away with impunity, and precipitation in proposing changes for which the people were unprepared, was one of the Protector's great mistakes.¹

Meantime the English and their Protestant allies were defeated in Scotland. On June 21 a French force sailed up the Channel, laid siege to the castle of St. Andrew's, which after a few weeks was taken and razed to the ground, as having been profaned by the murder of a legate.²

It was apparent that only by compulsion could the young Queen of Scots become the wife of Edward. The Duke of Somerset was therefore determined to lead a large army into Scotland, on the ever-ready plea of retaliation for the incursions frequently made by the Scots on the English border.

He accordingly took the command of fourteen thousand foot-soldiers and four thousand horse, and halted on September 8 near Preston-pans, within sight of the Scottish army encamped at Musselburgh, a few miles south-east of Edinburgh. News of the approach of large forces from England had already in great measure united hostile parties in Scotland. The English faction which held St. Andrew's, after looking in vain for aid from England, had yielded. Feuds and religious differences were now for a time forgotten, and the ancient war-signal—the fiery cross of wood lighted and then quenched in the blood of a goat, was carried from clan to clan; the baron came from his lowland

¹ See Froude's History, v. 36-40.

² Two Protestant ministers were in the castle, and were made prisoners by the French; one of whom was the celebrated John Knox, then beginning his ministry.

castle, the Highland chief from his home on the mountains, even Protestant preachers and Catholic priests alike buckled on their armour, and 'in the overpowering peril of Scottish freedom, there was one people with one cause.'¹

The Scottish forces nearly doubled the English, but Somerset had greatly the superiority in cavalry, and after repeated skirmishes, the English gained the brow of the hill at Falside, from which they were able to fire on the ranks below. The battle fought on the 10th, called from a neighbouring mountain that of Pinkie-Cleugh, is described as more than ordinarily terrible. The impetuous valour of the Scots at first carried all before them—they had even seized hold of the royal standard—but when victorious they broke their line, and the tide of the 'heady fight' was turned by the orderly advance of the English horsemen. It is said that the Highlanders held together and made an orderly retreat, but the engagement soon became 'more a massacre than a battle,' the English resenting their first repulse and generally giving no quarter.

This great battle, the most disastrous defeat sustained by the Scots since that at Flodden Field, was the last engagement of importance fought between Scots and English before the Union. The number of prisoners is said to have amounted to about fifteen hundred, among whom was the Earl of Huntly, lord chancellor of Scotland. The quantity of armour and weapons collected on the field was immense, more than thirty-thousand swords and coats of mail being sent to England by ship.

But although the Duke of Somerset had gained the day, he was farther than ever from attaining his desired object, possession of the young queen, the destined bride of Edward. General hatred of England was the natural consequence of the duke's bloody inroad. Mary was sent for safety to the impregnable castle of Dumbarton, and while the Protector hoped that the Estates would sue to him for peace, they were sending couriers to France to offer their young queen and the crown of Scotland to the Dauphin.

Having burnt Leith and the ships in the harbour, and left

¹ Froude, v. 46. The 'fiery cross,' used as a summons to arms by the Scots in ancient times, was passed on from place to place by a swift messenger, with no word but the place of meeting to which it was a call.—See note to Scott's 'Lady of the Lake.'

² Mr. Froude speaks of 'the disastrous victory of Pinkie-Cleugh,' but for which 'the friends of England would have continued to increase, the French alliance would have grown weaker, and the daughter of James V. at all events would have remained at home.'

a few small garrisons, the Duke of Somerset returned home. Scotland was too barren to afford subsistence to his troops, and he was wanted in England, where he was the hero of the hour. He declined the offer of a triumphal procession into London, but the lord mayor and the aldermen met him on his return and escorted him to the palace. The Council granted him fresh distinction, and an order was issued by young Edward that his uncle should be placed on the right hand and next to the throne in Parliament.

Whilst the Protector was invading Scotland, the visitation of the churches was proceeding, and in every set of visitors there was at least one preacher of Protestant doctrines ready to exhort the people against superstition.¹ In London the visitors were well received, except by the bishop. Dr. Bonner was committed to the Fleet prison for contempt of the king's authority, but was soon afterwards released on submission. Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, who was more determined in his opposition and declared the visitation illegal, was committed also to the Fleet, though but for a short time.

In the late reign Gardiner had striven to destroy Cranmer; the retaliation now inflicted does not appear to have been justified by law.² When Cranmer visited Gardiner in prison, the two bishops are said to have debated on justification by faith and how far charity was included. Neither of the disputants would have thought it right to allow to every man his own interpretation of Scripture.

But when, on November 4, Edward's first Parliament met, the spirit of charity had really gained for the moment the upper hand. The Six Articles Bill was repealed; so were also the Acts of Henry IV. and V. against the Lollards. The sharper clauses of the Act of Supremacy were blotted out of the statute book, and some offences which had in the late reign been aggravated into treason or felony were again reduced to the class of misdemeanours. The severe laws passed against vagrancy in the last reign were said to have failed by reason of their too great severity. But the number of vagrants was still so great an evil that the Protector was induced to propose another Act, which was likewise extremely severe. According to this, a servant who left his work, or any able-bodied vagrant without means of support, if not going in search of labour, should be brought before the two nearest magistrates, and, if convicted of idleness, be branded on the breast with the letter V, and adjudged to some honest neighbour as 'a slave' for the term of two years, he

¹ Strype's 'Cranmer,' p. 147.

² Froude, v. 61.

engaging to set the man to work and supply him with the bare necessities of life. Burnet says that this Act was directed against vagrant monks who spread disloyalty among the people. Lingard declares that it was aimed at the mendicants who had formerly been relieved at the gates of the monasteries. The Act was passed at a time when poverty was increasing, and as it was found too cruel to be put in force it was repealed after two years. Another Act passed which, although it promised well, failed to bring good effects. There had been small monastic institutions, called chantries, for secular priests whose chief duty was to perform daily masses for the founders. Some of these had been abolished in the late reign, and it was proposed that with these funds alms-houses, schools, and hospitals should be founded, the number of working clergymen increased, and aid given to public works. The Council asked Parliament to repose in them the same uncontrolled confidence in this matter which had been allowed to Henry.

Although Cranmer and seven other bishops opposed the grant in the first instance, it was passed by a triumphant majority; but the Council divided the spoil without benefit to the country.¹

When the Scottish emissaries brought to Paris the offer of their queen's hand, the French court at once accepted the terms. If the Scottish Estates should require their queen's husband to reside in Scotland, the King of France would be compelled to refuse the request, and would find Mary another husband, but otherwise she might become the wife of the Dauphin, and the French government would make the cause of Scotland its own.

If a wild Irish chieftain could win the royal bride of Scotland, one was ready in the person of 'young Gerald of Kildare,' and, ever prompt to rise, O'Donnell broke out into rebellion in the North of Ireland, supported by fifteen hundred Scots. In the spring the Protector was apprised that ships were preparing to transport a French army into Scotland. To anticipate their arrival he sent a small force across the border, which took possession of Haddington, and wasted the country round Edinburgh.

On June 16 the French landed at Leith, and the terms required by the Scottish Convocation were promptly agreed upon. The Dauphin would espouse the young queen, and the crowns of France and Scotland be formally and *for ever* united, Scotland retaining her laws and liberties, and being promised protection from 'her auld enemies' the English.² It was in

¹ Hallam, i. 94; Lingard, vii. 22.

² Acts of the Scottish Parliament, 1548. See Froude, v. 78.

vain that the Protector now offered terms of conciliation. The Scots were exasperated against the English, and Mary of Guise—the queen-mother—used all her influence for France. It was determined that Mary should be placed under the protection of her adopted country. The French admiral skilfully avoided the English cruisers, and carried the young queen safely to Brest. Although only in her sixth year, she was speedily affianced to the Dauphin. The prize of the English contention was lost, while England was actually drifting into a French war.

Fresh dissensions arose respecting points of religion, and complaints were made that Bishop Gardiner, on his release from confinement, had attacked the itinerant preachers. The Duke of Somerset sent for the bishop and desired him to preach a sermon before the Court on the points then in debate, as a test, telling him that as Protector he stood in the king's place. Although the bishop's sermon has been pronounced very moderate, the governing powers were against him, and he was imprisoned in the Tower.¹

The Protector now commenced building for himself a magnificent palace suitable to his princely fortune, the place of which is still marked by the name of Somerset House, in the Strand. He pulled down a parish church and a beautiful chapel erected by the last prior of the knights of St. John, to clear the ground.

General discontent was now gaining ground, but from causes apart from religion. The high price of wool and the cheapness of sheep-farming encouraged landowners to throw their arable lands into pasture and increase the size of farms; consequently meat became dearer, and so many labourers were dismissed as to increase greatly the number of mendicants seeking in vain for relief. Dr. Latimer, who preached at St. Paul's Cross in the spring of 1548, inveighed against 'graziers, enclosers, and raisers of rents' as public enemies. In places where there had lately been many householders, 'there is now,' said Latimer, 'but a shepherd and his dog.' As there was no organised plan of relief for the poor, some act of government appeared requisite, but it was very difficult to determine on the best expedient.

The Protector endeavoured to uphold the statutes enforcing the tillage of the soil, which had been passed in the last reign; he established a Court of Appeal in his own house, where complainants might seek redress; and he sent commissioners to

¹ Froude, v. 102-106. If other statesmen had not agreed in inflicting punishment on the Bishop, he would have been released after the fall of Somerset.

traverse the country, inquiring into the condition of the people, that the names of any who were found to have offended against the law might be made known. The commissioners were at first received by the people with exultation, in the hope of the speedy redress of all their grievances. But 'the leaders of a suffering nation,' as it has been well said, 'cannot with impunity excite hopes of relief which they have no means of realising.'¹ The great enclosure of commons which had lately taken place, depriving the poor of their privilege of common pasturage, added greatly to the distress; and when it could be stated that whole villages had been demolished and the inhabitants turned adrift, we cannot wonder that the general discontent became formidable. One of the commissioners wrote to the Protector that he found the people mostly well-disposed, and that if they had good justices of the peace, and loyal preachers, there would be no danger of sedition. But good influence was altogether wanting, rival noblemen eagerly ascribed existing grievances to the mistaken policy of the Protector, and discontented clergy inflamed the minds of the people. Moreover, just when Somerset was anxiously hoping to conciliate the aggrieved classes, serious complaints reached him of the tyrannical conduct and the ambitious designs of his brother, Lord Seymour.²

The High Admiral, enriched by a grant of manors in eighteen counties, at the beginning of the reign, soon afterwards married the widowed queen, Catherine Parr, who had been attached to him when first a widow, and his now unbridled ambition incited him to undermine in every way the Protector's power. The queen dowager's death, which occurred in September, 1548, still further stimulated Seymour's ambition, for he next aspired to the hand of the Princess Elizabeth, who had for some time resided with her stepmother under his roof. He endeavoured to win Edward's affection by supplying him secretly with money, entered into a treaty with the pirates who infested the English Channel, and is said to have obtained large sums for his purposes from Sherington, the master of the mint at Bristol, who had amassed an enormous fortune by the purchase of church plate which he had mixed with base metal and coined into shillings.

Envious of his brother's ascendancy, and desperately seeking to make himself the head of a party, Seymour applied for aid to Lord Southampton, the late lord chancellor, and other

¹ Froude, v. 125.

² See Tytler, 'Edward VI. and Mary,' i. 114-119.

noblemen supposed to be unfavourable to Somerset. But Wriothesley, although he might resent his displacement, disapproved of Seymour's projects, and informed the Protector of the danger.

On January 17, Seymour was committed to the Tower. On February 23 the Privy Council ordered the numerous charges against him to be read over in his presence, and called upon him to reply, which he refused, except in due course upon open trial. The chancellor and the rest of the council then determined on passing an Act of Attainder; thus, says Mr. Hallam, following the worst precedents in the reign of Henry. The bill passed the House of Lords without opposition. The admiral was brought before a Committee of both Houses, before whom the charges were again read. He admitted that he had endeavoured to gain possession of the king's person, alleging that he had afterwards relinquished the plan. He had sought to induce the king, he said, to obtain from Parliament a change in the government. He refused to reply to the more serious charges. Seymour had friends in the House of Commons who pleaded in his favour; the House asked to hear the evidence again, and the four peers, among whom was Wriothesley, who had previously given their depositions, repeated their disclosures.

The lawyers gave their opinion that the offences of the Lord High Admiral came within the compass of high treason, and finally, the Commons' House 'being marvellously full,' almost four hundred present, and not more than ten or twelve objecting, the bill passed, and was sent to the king with a request that 'justice might have place.' 'How striking a picture,' says Hallam, 'it affords of the sixteenth century to behold the popular and well-natured Duke of Somerset, more estimable at least than any other statesman employed under Edward, not only promoting the unjust condemnation of his brother, but signing the warrant under which he was beheaded!' Lord Seymour was executed on March 20.¹ His intention to depose the Protector, and effect a change of government by force, appears to have been clearly proved. Dr. Latimer declared that Seymour 'was a wicked man, and the realm was well rid of him.' Bishop Burnet says of the execution: 'This was the only cure that his ambition seemed capable of; yet it was thought against nature that one brother should fall by the hand of another; and the attainting a man without hearing him was

¹ Froude, v. 155; Hallam, i. 39. See Tytler's replies to Lingard, 'Edward VI. and Mary,' i. 150. Hallam acknowledges that Seymour was 'a dangerous and unprincipled man,' but thinks that no evidence of treason was brought against him.

condemned as contrary to nature and justice ; so the Protector suffered almost as much from his death as he could have done by his life.'¹

The state of public affairs at the beginning of the year 1549 caused deep anxiety to the Protector's best friends. Sir William Paget implored him to be more careful in introducing innovations, a course dangerous for a king, and highly perilous to 'a subject in great authority, as is your Grace.' Paget also warned Somerset of his increasing unpopularity in the council, and advised him to be less arrogant.²

The Protector was inclined to sympathise with the people. He had before inveighed against the covetousness of the gentlemen, and in the month of May he issued a royal proclamation ordering that the recently enclosed commons should be again thrown open. By this he gave great offence to many of the council and to other men of high rank, who accused him of encouraging the spirit of revolt.

The more energetic lords determined to act for themselves : they attempted in different parts of the country to direct the sheriffs and magistrates ; and when serious affrays took place in Cornwall they sent private orders, unknown to Somerset, that the disturbances should be put down by force. The Protector had flattered himself that the religious changes lately introduced had been generally popular in the country, but it was not so ; great numbers in fact still remained attached to the Roman Catholic Church and were excited to discontent by the priests. When the people suffer they look back upon past times as periods of greater happiness ; and, distressed by want of work, dearness of food, and the inclosure of the commons on which they had fed their cows and their poultry, they even longed again for the time when the prayers of the Church were in Latin and when heretics were burned at the stake ! The fifteen articles of the bold petition sent up by the Commons of Devonshire and Cornwall, in June, 1549, must have been instigated by displaced or discontented clergy. They demanded the restoration of the statute of 'the Six Articles,' of the Latin mass, the restoration of all Catholic services, and that the English Bible should be withdrawn.

At this period Cornwall had its separate language, as had Ireland, Wales, and the Isle of Man, each differing from the other ; and the same petition which required the mass to be again performed in Latin declared that the Cornishmen utterly

¹ Burnet, ii. 73.

² Tytler, i. 174.

refused 'the new English,' which some of them could not understand.¹

The Protector was very reluctant to use the sword against men whose cause he considered partially just. On July 8 he replied at length, in the king's name, to their supplication, rebuking them for making their demands 'sword in hand.' 'If any thing be to be reformed in our laws,' said the royal message, 'Parliament is near at hand—a place where men ought, and have ever been wont, to commune on such matters.' As the people had feared impediments in christening their children, he promised that the priests should not fail to perform the rite. The Protector expressed surprise that any persons could again require the 'Six Articles,' and other severe laws affecting treason, 'the which our whole Parliament, almost on their knees, required us to abolish,' and for abrogating them 'with a whole voice gave us most humble thanks. Will you that we shall resume the scourge again?' Concerning the complaint against taxes, it was stated that the wars carried on by England against France and Scotland had so impoverished the treasury that, in spite of the late loans and benevolences, Henry VIII. left a debt of three hundred thousand pounds.² But by his sympathy with the people, Somerset offended the Council without having conciliated the insurgents, and he was compelled at last to let the Council take their own course. Troops were wanted in opposite directions. Lord Grey went with a force of foreign mercenaries to support Lord Russell, in Devonshire, against an organised force of twenty thousand men headed by Sir Thomas Pomeroy, Sir Humphrey Arundel, and the Mayor of Bodmin, who were provided with cannon and paraded the cross on their banner. The insurgents laid siege to Exeter, but on the fortieth day were driven from the walls with the loss of nine hundred men, and by the aid of the foreign troops were at length completely subdued. Although Protestantism generally prevailed in London and other large towns, and likewise in the eastern counties, the Roman Catholics were still the majority in the North and West of England, and the disturbances which became so formidable in the western counties appear to have been greatly excited by the change of religion. Martial law was proclaimed, the Mayor of Bodmin and other

¹ Froude, v. 178. 'Cornish,' says Mr. Merivale, 'was used for the last time in the church at the southern extremity of Cornwall about 1680,' although 'the language still lingered west of Penzance some years later.'—'Historical Sketches.'

² Tytler, i. 180–182. 'There are in the State Paper Office three drafts of this answer, none of them signed by Edward or Somerset.'

rebel leaders were hanged, and four thousand rebels are said to have been killed in action in the West. The peasantry were greatly irritated by the employment of foreign troops, and instantly killed every foreign soldier who fell into their hands. The formidable rising which took place at the same time in Norfolk was not the consequence of religious innovations, but of discontent occasioned by the inclosure of the commons.¹

The people who assembled at an annual festival on July 6 at Wymondham loudly complained of grievances, expressing their favourable opinion of the Protector, but alleging the inadequacy of his powers to redress their wrongs. They found a daring leader in Robert Ket, a tanner by trade, who was the lord of three manors in the county.² He formed a central camp on Mousehold Hill, near Norwich, where by degrees 16,000 men assembled and built for themselves turf huts roofed with boughs. On this spot was a large spreading tree, which they called the Oak of Reformation, and converted into a hall of justice, fixing on it cross beams and rafts and roofing it over with boards. There Ket sat daily to administer what he called justice on any of the gentry who were brought before him on the charge of robbing the poor. The Mayor of Norwich and other gentlemen were detained prisoners in the camp, and compelled to assist at this tribunal.

Ket's followers were directed to enter country houses, seize arms, and bring cattle and provisions to the encampment, but were in the beginning forbidden to shed blood, and punished when they tried to secrete booty for their private use.³ There was a pulpit at which clergymen were encouraged to preach. Efforts were made to pacify the leaders of this insurrection. The mayor and others often went up into the tree to persuade the confederates to desist from their unlawful proceedings, and on July 31 a herald arrived bringing a free pardon for all who would return to their homes. The people would have submitted, had not Ket, elated by finding himself captain of 20,000 men, resented the word pardon. Thereupon the herald called him a traitor, and an uproar ensued.

The Marquis of Northampton entered Norwich with 1,000 English horse and a troop of Italians, but was worsted by Ket, who set part of the city on fire, killed Lord Sheffield and a hundred men, and compelled the marquis and his followers to leave the county. The Council was alarmed and embarrassed, and

¹ Hallam, 'Constitutional History,' i. 92.

² Lingard, vii. 47.

³ Blomefield's 'History of Norfolk,' ii., chap. xxv. 163.

ordered Lord Warwick to quell this formidable outbreak before he proceeded to the invasion of Scotland.

When Warwick reached Norwich on August 23 with 8,000 men, he found the city still in the power of the rebels; but, after a fierce contention, German reinforcements arrived and secured victory to the government.

Warwick, after cutting off supplies from the rebel camp, again offered pardon to all excepting the leaders, which conditions were, after some delay, accepted.¹ The full severity of the law fell only upon the brothers Ket and nine others. The Kets were sent to London to be examined by the Council, and were brought back to Norfolk late in the autumn for punishment.

Robert Ket was hung in chains on Norwich Castle, William on the tower of Wymondham Church. Risings in Yorkshire had also been put down, but the government had lost popularity and the treasury was impoverished by the employment of mercenary troops.² It had been reported that chaplains of the Princess Mary were seen among the insurgents in Devonshire, and Somerset consequently wrote to the princess on the subject, adding that he did not doubt her loyalty. Mary gave a short reply that, if the realm was in disorder, the fault was not hers: neither she nor any of her household had held communication with the rebels.

The Duke of Somerset having now been Protector for nearly three years, the Council interfered with complaints of his government both at home and abroad, and sent a memorandum of their dissatisfaction to the Emperor Charles V. War had not yet been declared between England and France, but Boulogne was threatened by the French, while the English garrison was but ill-provided. The young Queen of Scots, who should have been the bride of Edward, was being educated in France. The Council stated that when Somerset first took the chief direction it was upon the condition that on all important affairs he should be guided by their advice; but that, on the contrary, he had become arrogant and despotic; that he disposed of offices at his own pleasure; and that, without regard to the troubled state of the country, he had erected sumptuous habitations for himself. When Somerset was aware of the dissatisfaction, and saw himself opposed by the councillors appointed by the late king, he

¹ Lingard, vii. 48. After these events, lords-lieutenant of counties were instituted, empowered to inquire into insurrections and to levy men to subdue them.

² The employment of foreign soldiers was called 'ruling by strangers.'—Burnet, iii. 147.

resolved to accuse them of treason, and persuaded Edward that a conspiracy had been formed against his royal power. He circulated handbills calling on the people to defend their friend, the Protector, and issued an order under the Great Seal for a general muster to be held at Hampton Court, where Edward then resided. The corporation of London were required to send 1,000 men for the king's defence, and the lieutenant of the Tower was ordered to refuse admission to any member of the Council. Thus began war between the Protector and the Council; the Council gained the advantage both in the city and the neighbouring counties, where they also circulated their handbills.

A great multitude thronged around Hampton Court on October 6, when Edward was induced to speak to them. 'Good people, I pray you,' said he, 'be good to us and to our uncle.' Somerset spoke to the people also, in passionate language, declaring that his destruction would involve that of the king and commonwealth; that 'all would perish together.' In his appeal he relied too far on his popularity; the people were not inclined to rise in an insurrection on his behalf, and, by his hostility towards the Council, he destroyed the chance of an amicable accommodation had he profited by their remonstrances.

In the expectation of commotion, Hampton Court was thought too insecure, and the young king was hurried off to Windsor on horseback late at night. To guard against popular excitement, the Lords of the Council held a meeting at Guildhall, where they assured the citizens that they had no intention of altering the established form of religion. They dreaded that tumults might ensue after Somerset's unwise proclamation, and that he might carry off the king to a distance. Having now obtained the ascendancy, on October 12 they proceeded to Windsor; those members of the Council who had acted under Somerset's dictation were removed, and on the 14th the Protector was himself sent to the Tower. The Protectorate was ended.

Dudley Earl of Warwick, who had risen to an important place in the Council, chiefly through his military skill in suppressing the late insurrections, was the son of that Edmund Dudley executed at the beginning of the last reign. Henry VIII. allowed him to inherit through his mother the title of Lord Lisle, with a large estate, and made him one of his executors. Somerset acknowledged Warwick's growing influence by privately writing to him, and appealing to their former friendship. He

did not deny the charges brought against him, but threw himself on the king's mercy, and after being deposed from the Protectorate by Parliament, and deprived of estates which he had appropriated, valued at £2,000 per annum, was released from confinement on February 6. Two months afterwards Somerset resumed his place at the Council-board, and his reconciliation with Warwick appeared complete when on June 3 the duke's daughter, Lady Anne Seymour, was married to Lord Ambrose Dudley, eldest son of Warwick, the king and the French ambassadors being present at the pageant held at Richmond on the occasion.

A treaty of peace had been concluded with France; Boulogne was ceded by the English on the promise that the French king would pay 400,000 crowns for its possession; and a negotiation had been begun for the marriage of Edward with the Princess Elizabeth of France. Although the Duke of Somerset took part in these demonstrations, he could not regain his ascendancy, and the sum paid by the King of France for Boulogne went little way towards remedying the emptiness of the exchequer, ascribed to the Protector's mismanagement.

An unprincipled desire of riches was the crying evil among merchants as well as statesmen, and English commerce was declared to be greatly injured by the inferior goods exported from this country, which, 'through the naughtiness of the making, remained unsold.' Latimer and other leading Protestant clergymen preached boldly before the young king concerning these malpractices.

The Duke of Somerset had forbore to interfere with the religious observances of the Princess Mary; but when Warwick directed the Council, her privileges were restricted, and, on suspicion that she corresponded with the emperor, Mary was ordered to appear at court. The princess obeyed, and rode into London attended by a number of noblemen and gentlemen, each of whom wore a symbol of the Catholic faith. Mary replied to the letter which Edward had been induced to write to her, that he was too young to be a judge on such subjects, and she refused to submit to the direction of the Privy Council. The dread which the English Council felt of the emperor's resentment was the princess's chief defence from their hostility.

The intolerance of Charles V. towards his Protestant subjects brought into England a stream of Flemish weavers, who were well received by Edward's ministers. The Duke of Somerset established a colony of refugees at Glastonbury at his own expense, and Austin-Friars was assigned to those remaining in

London. The deficiency of accommodation arising from the too hasty destruction of Catholic hospitals and almshouses was in part supplied by the liberality of London citizens.

Dr. Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, had been now for two years a prisoner in the Tower, the Duke of Somerset having endeavoured in vain to procure his liberation. The bishop was brought to trial at Lambeth in December, 1550, on charges partly affecting his conduct during the past reign. He was deprived of his bishopric and ordered by the Council to be confined in a meaner cell in the Tower. The two great rivals were not to be reconciled by the alliance of their children in marriage. Both aimed at a degree of power incompatible with the position of a subject. Somerset wished to induce Edward to marry his daughter, the Lady Jane Seymour, and had devised the arrest of Warwick, Northampton, and Herbert, the triumvirate then at the head of affairs. Warwick, on the other hand, was infusing suspicions into Edward's mind against his uncle the duke, preliminary to his own elevation and that of his party. On October 11, Warwick became Duke of Northumberland; Lord Dorset was raised to the lately extinct title of Duke of Suffolk, and Sir William Herbert was made Earl of Pembroke. On the 16th, Somerset was arrested on a charge of treason and sent to the Tower, as were also his duchess and several other persons of rank. The prisoners were subjected as usual to private examinations in prison. Lord Arundel admitted, after many denials, that he had joined Somerset in a plan for arresting Warwick and Northampton at the Council, and for bringing about a change of government.

On December 1, long before dawn, the duke was brought in a barge from the Tower to Westminster Hall. The Council so much feared popular excitement that they had previously issued orders that householders should keep within. But the people were eager in the cause of one whom they regarded as their champion, and by daybreak a vast multitude had assembled in Westminster, all in favour of Somerset, all execrating Northumberland. The principal charges against him were that he had collected men in his house with an evil design against the Duke of Northumberland, and that he intended to raise the city of London against the Council, and to resist his own arrest. The duke admitted that he had collected men, and that he had spoken of killing Northumberland and Northampton, but maintained that he had relinquished the design. Northumberland abandoned the charge of treason, and when a verdict of 'not guilty' was returned upon the first count, the crowd without,

believing in a complete acquittal, uttered shouts which were repeated up to Charing Cross and Long Acre.

But, although acquitted of treason, the duke was found guilty of felony, for which death was equally the award. According to the account of the proceedings laid before the king, Somerset confessed that he had once intended to destroy Northumberland, and asked his forgiveness, and Northumberland promised that he would use his utmost efforts to save his life. These were times when conspiracies were frequent, and political life often resembled a duel in which the vanquished had little hope. In the records of the Privy Council at this time are many entries of conspirators put to death by martial law; and it is noted in Edward's journal, but a few months before this trial, that the duke himself had executed certain persons for conspiracy against the gentlemen of Okingham.¹ 'Through such a maze of treachery,' says Mr. Froude, 'the truth is hard to read.' While the party in power charged against Somerset the death of his brother and his own arrogance, letting it appear in no doubtful terms that if he should escape punishment he would throw the whole realm into confusion, the general indignation of the people was not to be concealed. To guard against an attempt at rescue, a thousand men-at-arms from the country were conveyed to Tower Hill in readiness for January 22. Early on that morning the great square and its approaches were filled with sympathising spectators. It was a little before eight when Somerset appeared on the scaffold; he was singularly handsome, and wore the splendid suit which he had used on occasions of state. His address to the people being interrupted by the arrival of soldiers, some confusion ensued, and as an officer rode up a shout was eagerly raised of 'A pardon from the king!' At this trying moment Somerset stood firm, exclaiming, 'There is no such thing, good people!' and continued his address, begging them to make no disturbance and to join him in prayer for the king. 'He was,' he said, 'content to die.' So passionately was he loved that those nearest to the scaffold started forward when his head fell on the block, and dipped their handkerchiefs in his blood.² Four of his friends were afterwards tried and executed, notwithstanding their protestations of innocence.

On January 30, 1552, Northumberland met the Parliament, and a second Act of Uniformity enforced penalties on those who refused to comply with the established Protestant ritual.

¹ Froude, xxviii., note (August 31, 1551, Edward's Journal).

² Ibid.

³ Froude, p. 389.

One unhappy victim had already suffered at the stake. Joan Bocher, a Kentish maiden, a friend of that Anne Ascue who had been executed for heresy under Henry VIII., was now condemned to death for denying the divinity of Christ. According to Dr. Burnet, the young king attempted to plead in poor Joan's favour, saying that it was hard to send her to be burned for wild opinions which might be occasioned by a disturbed brain, and that the reformers had condemned the Papists for similar cruelty.

Her life was prolonged for some months in the hope of her conversion, and Bishop Ridley had interviews with her, but in vain.¹ When Dr. Bonner was displaced from the bishopric of London, and sent to the Tower on account of his advocacy of the Roman Catholic faith, he was succeeded by Ridley. It is related that the mother and sister of Bonner constantly received a kindly welcome at Bishop Ridley's table, an act of kindness which Bonner in after-life was far from recognising.² In a sermon which Ridley preached before the king he spoke of the distress which the spoliation of public charities brought on the poor of London. Edward, who, although his mind was cramped by hard advisers, appears to have endeavoured to do his duty, asked the bishop's advice on the subject, who recommended him to consult the lord mayor, as the corporation had shown laudable zeal in the endowment of charities, and were better administrators of public funds than the Council. By their advice, the house of the Grey Friars was adapted for the reception of poor children, and remains to this day as Christ's Hospital School. St. Thomas's Hospital was also purchased for the relief of poor persons requiring medical aid, St. Bartholomew's received fresh funds, and, at the request of Bishop Ridley, the royal palace of Bridewell was turned into a workhouse for unemployed labourers.

The attempt to introduce the Protestant religion in place of the Catholic had been tried in Ireland, generally with ill-success. Catholic refugees and unfrocked monks, who poured across the Channel with other outlaws, had been sowing disaffection, and the greatest distress was occasioned by the deterioration of money, owing to which prices rose beyond the reach of the people. 'The Irish,' wrote the deputy, 'did not know the actual

¹ Wordsworth made the supposed reluctance of Edward to sign the warrant for Joan's execution the subject of one of his 'Ecclesiastical Sonnets.' Edward did not sign it, but he noted the event in his Journal. See Dr. Hook's 'Lives of the Archbishops,' and Hallam, i. 96, note.

² Dr. Milman's 'St. Paul's,' p. 226.

cause of their misery, and no marvel, when the wisest were blinded ;' but they imputed it to the English rule. In England money was so scarce that by Northumberland's orders commissions were repeatedly sent out to collect what valuables yet remained in the churches.¹ Silver bells, organs, and the ornaments of tombs, were seized for the use of Government.

It was easy to impute the blame of the impoverished treasury to the late Protector and the war with Scotland, but not easy to meet the difficulty. Sir Thomas Gresham, the founder of the English Exchange, pledged his own credit at Antwerp for the repayment of the debt contracted by England, and urged on Northumberland that, unless the accounts were paid, the credit of England would fall as low as that of the emperor, who at that time could not obtain a loan at 16 per cent.

When Northumberland summoned a new Parliament, at the beginning of 1553, he strove to direct the elections in his own interest. He had become the most powerful and the most wealthy of the English nobles, but in the spring of 1553 he became aware of the instability of his greatness. Edward, who had always been delicate, now fell ill ; the prospect of a new reign was before the country, and Northumberland well knew that if the Princess Mary should inherit the crown, the Duke of Norfolk and Bishop Gardiner would re-enter the Council, and that he must confront the accusations of those over whom he had lately triumphed. He resolved to try the desperate expedient of changing the succession. The Duchess of Suffolk was the daughter of Mary, sister of Henry VIII., and was consequently the young king's first cousin. Northumberland determined to effect a marriage between the Lady Jane Grey, eldest daughter of the duchess, and his own fourth son, Lord Guildford Dudley, then only seventeen. This young and innocent pair were the destined victims of Northumberland's disastrous ambition.

Although both the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth had been once declared illegitimate by Henry VIII., they had been named by him as the successors of Edward, should he die without heirs ; and in case of both queens being childless, the line of Mary, Henry's younger sister, was to be preferred to that of Margaret, the Queen of Scotland. To bring about his purpose, Northumberland now tried to persuade Edward, like his father, to name his successor by will ; urging on him the greater security of the realm if ruled by one of his Protestant relations on the Suffolk

¹ Ridley, Bishop of London, begged and obtained the linen surplices, &c., for the use of the hospitals.—Froude, v. 459, note.

side, than if governed by his sister Mary, who would probably marry a foreign prince.

The scheme was too wild to receive immediate approval from any of Northumberland's councillors. The judges, when summoned to Greenwich and informed by Edward himself of his intentions, remonstrated that to alter the succession would violate the Act of Parliament confirming the late king's will, which they were bound to respect.

The hesitation of Chief Justice Montague and of others was not overcome until Edward empowered them to draw up the legal instrument by which the crown was to devolve on the Lady Jane and her heirs male, a draft of which the king had already signed, besides another paper granting them full pardon if they had been criminal in so doing.¹ Having thus prepared the way, and obtained complete mastery over Edward's mind, Northumberland assembled at Greenwich on June 21 the important Council whom he required to assist the design. The hour was solemn; Edward's death was known to be immediately impending, and the wisest of the Council recoiled from the undertaking before them. Archbishop Cranmer, the lord chancellor, twenty-two peers, and eight sons of peers, judges, and secretaries of state were there, all of whom signed, under the influence either of Edward's entreaties or of Northumberland's violence. One of the secretaries of state was William Cecil, afterwards, when Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's prudent minister. He at first refused to sign the paper, and by his own account only did so as a witness. Cranmer hesitated long; he, Edward's godfather, who had placed the crown on his young head, was entreated by the king not to stand out alone in opposition. He asked to see the judges, of whose prudent protest he was not aware. They told him that he might sign, if he so wished, without a breach of law. He returned to the king's bedside, consenting to obey his wish, and Cranmer's name appeared at the head of the fatal list.²

Edward expired on Thursday, July 6. Care had been taken by Northumberland to keep the king's death secret in London; but a friend at the palace sent immediate notice to Mary, who was at Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire, that she might remove to a safer distance, and she instantly mounted her horse and rode without halt to Kenninghall in Norfolk, where she could be protected by the Catholic family of Howard. Her rapid flight was timely; a son of the Duke of Northumberland

¹ Lingard, vii. 101.

² Froude, 512. Macaulay's essay, 'Burleigh and his Times.'

reached Hoddesdon the next morning with a troop of horse, and would probably have carried her to the Tower.

On Saturday, the 8th, the lord mayor and aldermen were summoned to Greenwich to affix their signatures to the letters patent which conferred the crown on the Lady Jane; but they were sworn to observe secrecy. At that time Lady Jane remained in ignorance of the part assigned her, and even of Edward's death.

On the 9th she received an order from the Council to go immediately to Sion House, where she would find commands from the king. The next morning she was visited by the Duke of Northumberland and other noblemen, in whose presence and that of her mother, the Duchess of Suffolk, the duke, as president of the Council, informed her of the king's death, and made his extraordinary statement concerning the succession to the crown. He set forth that Edward had been anxious to preserve the kingdom from relapsing into false religion, and especially from falling under Mary's rule. Both the Lady Mary and the Lady Elizabeth had been debarred from the succession by Act of Parliament during the last reign, and King Henry had not intended that either of them should inherit the crown, which Edward had consequently bequeathed to her, his cousin, the eldest daughter of that House of Suffolk preferred by Henry to the House of Stuart. Should the Lady Jane die without heirs, her sister, Lady Catherine Grey, lately married to the son of the Earl of Pembroke, would be her successor.

At the close of this address, the duke and the four lords, Northampton, Arundel, Huntingdon, and Pembroke, fell on their knees before Lady Jane, saluting her as their sovereign.¹

Overpowered by emotion, Lady Jane trembled, and fell fainting to the ground. She grieved for the death of her royal cousin, to whom she was affectionately attached, but she knew not how false was Northumberland's representation—how anxiously perilous the position which he invited her to assume. When she recovered consciousness, she told the friends who surrounded her that she thought herself unfit to be a queen, but that if she were so by right, she trusted that God would give her strength to rule wisely. She was nearly of the same age as Edward, and, like him, had received a learned education. She was pious, maidenly, and unassuming, and had continued

¹ Mr. Froude, in his account of this interview, follows Bocardo's 'History of the Revolution in England on the Death of Edward VI.,' printed at Venice, 1558. Bocardo had the account, says Mr. Froude, from Jane herself.

after her marriage to reside with her mother by her own wish. She was immediately required to assume royal dignity. At three on the same day she landed at the Tower, then the usual residence of monarchs before their coronation. She was conveyed thither in the royal barge, and her mother, the Duchess of Suffolk, bore her train. The lord treasurer presented her with the crown. That same evening heralds proclaimed in London, before an astonished crowd, the illegitimacy of Mary and the accession of Queen Jane, and the preachers were commanded to explain in public the title of the new sovereign. Ridley, Bishop of London—influenced, probably, both by Protestant zeal and admiration for Lady Jane's beauty and excellence—was warm in advocating her cause, and preached at St. Paul's Cross, asserting that the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth had no legal title to the crown.¹

But although the greater part of the citizens of London were Protestants, they hated the Duke of Northumberland, and received the news of his daughter-in-law's accession in silence. The people had sympathised with Queen Catherine, and were aware that the Princess Mary had suffered persecution on account of her faith. An unfortunate vintner's boy, who ventured to exclaim 'The Lady Mary has the better right,' received sharp punishment at the pillory, which did not increase the popularity of Queen Jane.

On the same day that the new queen was proclaimed, the lords in attendance received a letter from Mary, expressing her surprise that due notice of her brother's death had not been sent her, and claiming the crown as her right under her father's will. She offered them pardon for their past conduct if they would immediately cause her accession to be proclaimed in London and other places. Mary had already held communication with the ambassador of Charles V., informing him of her present safety, and desiring the emperor's advice. A courier was sent to Brussels, but the ambassador had little confidence in Mary's position, fearing that she would fall into the hands of Northumberland.

In reply to her letter, the duke explained the 'letters patent,' signed by himself and by the nobility, which entitled the Lady Jane to ascend the throne; warned Mary not to attempt to turn the people from their allegiance, and promised that, as a subject of Queen Jane, she should receive all the respect which was her due. This letter was signed by the archbishop, the chancellor, and many councillors. At the very

¹ Dr. Milman's 'St Paul's,' p. 232.

time that Northumberland wrote thus arrogantly, he hoped that Mary would soon fall into his power; but the news promptly reached London that already several peers and knights had joined her, that Lord Derby was marching from Cheshire to her aid with 20,000 men, and that she had been proclaimed in Buckinghamshire and in Devon.

The situation of Northumberland was extremely perplexing. His presence was necessary in London, but the Council urged him, as the ablest general, to take command of the forces which were to march against Mary.

After taking leave of the Council in terms which betrayed his fears, Northumberland left London on July 14, with his four sons, to join the troops which had been sent on to Newmarket. The gloomy silence of the citizens discomposed him, no one wishing him success. He trusted that the Protestant spirit in London would prevent a revolution during his absence. But although preachers inveighed against Mary's Catholic faith, the conduct of the men in power had made the Protestant cause unpopular. The Princess Mary, in order the more readily to communicate with Flanders, had left Kenninghall for Framlingham in Suffolk, where she was joined in a few days by more than 30,000 men, all enthusiastic in her cause, whilst the ranks of Northumberland's army were thinned by desertion. His heart failed him on hearing that he was proclaimed a rebel, and that a price was offered for his head. He retreated to Cambridge and wrote to the Council for immediate reinforcements. But the Council felt far more anxiety for themselves than for Northumberland. The thought of sending treasure to France to purchase the aid of the French king—a step equally short-sighted and treasonable—was laid aside as unfitting in the present emergency, and they resolved by a counter-revolution to save their own lives. They summoned the lord mayor and a deputation of aldermen to Baynard's Castle, where the Earl of Arundel declaimed against Northumberland's ambition, and asserted the right of the two Princesses Mary and Elizabeth.¹ The most powerful member of the Council was the Earl of Pembroke, who had profited largely by recent appropriations, and had therefore reason to dread Catholic ascendancy. Although his son had married the Lady Catherine Grey, Northumberland had doubted his good faith, and at this meeting Pembroke spoke with violence on behalf of Mary. No voice was raised in favour of her whom the French ambassador called 'The Twelfth-day Queen.'

¹ Baynard's Castle was about three quarters of a mile above London Bridge.

Her father, the Duke of Suffolk, signed the proclamation of Mary; rushing to his daughter's room, he told her of the determination of the Council, and that she was no longer queen. Jane replied that his words were more welcome than had been those which called her to the throne.¹ The lords proceeded with the lord mayor and heralds to proclaim Queen Mary at the cross at Cheapside. The lords walked in state to St. Paul's, the bells which remained in the churches were rung, there was feasting in the streets, and all London appeared to rejoice.

On the night of July 19, a letter was sent to the Duke of Northumberland by the Council, ordering him, in the name of Queen Mary, to lay down his arms. At the same time Arundel and Paget, attended by about thirty horsemen, departed for Framlingham Castle to petition Mary for pardon and to impute to Northumberland the responsibility of their acts. The news of the revolution in London had already reached the duke. He sent for Dr. Sandys, the vice-chancellor, and, accompanied by him, hastened to the market-cross at Cambridge; after protesting that he had acted under orders from the Council in the late treason, he endeavoured to exonerate himself by crying 'God save Queen Mary!' and threw up his cap in an impotent pretence of satisfaction. Next morning he was eagerly arrested by the Earl of Arundel, his former associate, in the hope of proving his own loyalty, and was brought to London with one of his sons.

Not more than ten days had passed since the duke left London on his ill-fated expedition. The people, who then gazed in silence, had become so furious against him that soldiers were needed for his protection, and the crowd shouted 'Death to the traitor!' Bishop Ridley had gone to Mary to ask for pardon, but, if she could have excused his treason, she had no pardon for a heretical bishop; and Ridley, with many others concerned in the late sedition, followed Northumberland to the Tower. Among the prisoners under confinement there was Edward, Lord Courtenay, son of the Marquis of Exeter who was executed for supposed treason under Henry VIII.; he was a great-grandson of Edward IV., and had been fifteen years a prisoner. Bishop Gardiner was offered liberty, but declined to leave the Tower till the arrival of Mary, who remained at New-

¹ Mr. Froude says that Jane 'asked innocently if she might leave the Tower and go home,' but that it was not easy to depart from the Tower. According to Lingard and Tytler, Jane was allowed to return to Sion House, but her name is given among those of the prisoners in the Tower.—Lingard, vii. 121-126.

hall in Essex, whilst the Council made preparations for her royal entry into London. The Duchess of Northumberland went to Newhall to beg for mercy, but could not obtain admittance. The short interval between the two reigns is commonly included in the reign of Mary, but Mary could not be considered on the throne of England before the failure of Northumberland's treasonable attempt.

CHAPTER XXV.

MARY.¹

A.D. 1553—1558.

THE first question for Mary's decision was the funeral of her brother, the late king, for which no orders had yet been issued. Mary's confidential advisers were the emperor and his ambassador in England; and although Charles V. had been the most decided upholder of the Catholic faith in his own dominions, he heard with alarm of the new queen's intention to celebrate the beginning of her reign by a requiem, and a mass for the repose of the soul of the Protestant Edward VI. Charles lost no time in sending his congratulations on her accession, but he earnestly intreated her to be cautious not to offend the religious feelings of her subjects—to remember that she owed her safety to Protestants as well as Catholics, and that good policy required her to act in all respects like a good Englishwoman. In tenacity of opinion Mary resembled her young brother. The opposite theological dogmas had been received by both with unwavering steadfastness; and as Edward was very reluctantly induced to allow his sister her Catholic ritual in consequence of the emperor's threat, so Mary, in whose eyes connivance at heresy was sin, could see but one course—to reinstate without delay the professors and the forms of the Roman Catholic faith. She yielded, however, to the argument that, as Edward died a heretic, he would be more fittingly interred with Protestant rites. Meantime it was requisite for the new queen to appear in London, and send the Duke of Northumberland to trial.

The Princess Elizabeth had taken no part in the late contest.

¹ Throughout this reign I have to acknowledge my obligations to Mr. Froude's great work. To ignore it would be to abandon all prospect of conveying any adequate impression of the period; and I am sensible I may have followed his narrative somewhat closely. The reader will be well rewarded for any reference he may make to this book.

Northumberland had offered her a large sum of money and a grant of lands if she would renounce her right to the succession in favour of the Lady Jane, but she prudently replied that she could not renounce her claim during the life of her elder sister. Immediately after the queen's proclamation was issued, Elizabeth sent her congratulations, and requested to be informed whether it was Mary's pleasure that she should appear in mourning for her brother; but mourning was forbidden by the new queen.

On Thursday, August 3, Mary entered London in the midst of a brilliant cavalcade, and Elizabeth, escorted by a retinue of ladies and 2,000 horsemen, was waiting to join her near the gates. The sisters embraced, and rode through the eastern streets of London together, amidst the thunder of cannon and great demonstrations of joy. It was the first public appearance of the princess, and as the eyes of the people rested on the royal sisters, the tall and blooming Elizabeth, who had nearly completed her twentieth year, appeared to advantage and more closely resembled her father than the small and sharp-featured queen. Neither the portly Henry nor the beautiful Catherine were recalled to memory by the presence of the new sovereign. Mary was thirty-six years of age, and her face already showed the lines of care.

Their journey ended at the Tower, the palace in which sovereigns first prepared to inaugurate their reign, the prison which the betrayed or condemned seldom left except to die!

Close by the Tower gates were the old Duke of Norfolk, whose life was just saved by the death of Henry, but who had not yet been liberated, Bishop Gardiner, Edward Courtenay, and the Duchess of Somerset, who all knelt to receive the queen. 'These are my prisoners,' exclaimed Mary as she alighted from her horse, and she stooped to kiss them.

Mary's heart was so much softened by her enthusiastic reception that, in the glow of happiness, she at first wished to pardon all the late conspirators, even Northumberland, certainly the Lady Jane, whom she considered an innocent girl who ought not to suffer for the crimes of others. But the imperial ambassador, although he had lately advised caution in matters of religion, now counselled severity, and declared that 'the rival queen and her husband must die with the duke,' setting before Mary (so wrote the ambassador of the Most Catholic Emperor) the examples of Maximus and his son Victor, both executed by the Emperor Theodosius—'Maximus because he had usurped the purple; Victor because, as the intended heir of his

father, he might have been an occasion of danger had he lived.¹ But, in spite of this reasoning, Mary was at this time determined to spare the innocent instruments of Northumberland's ambition.

On August 6 the remains of Edward VI. were interred at Westminster Abbey, Archbishop Cranmer officiating—the last act of his ministry.

At the same time, as had been determined previously, Catholic requiems were chanted in the Tower chapel, and in Mary's presence Gardiner and his assistant clergy sang a solemn mass for the deceased king. It must have been with feelings of despair that Cranmer performed the last rites for the young sovereign whom he had crowned a few years before with so much hope, and by whose dying wish, owing to Northumberland's baneful influence, he had been induced to set his hand to a treasonable document. The plea for the late attempt to set Lady Jane on the throne had been the imminent danger to which Protestants would be exposed under Mary; that attempt having failed, the danger of the Protestants was greatly aggravated, for the queen had now much to revenge. While her accession remained uncertain, Mary had allowed the imperial ambassador to promise in her name that she would make no changes in religion, but once on the throne she declared her intention of restoring the Catholic faith, and refused to recognise any laws made during Edward's minority. The most decidedly Protestant bishops were ejected in the first week of August. Bishop Gardiner was appointed chancellor, and Bonner, liberated from imprisonment, was restored in triumph to the see of London.

But riots occurred in some parts of London when the first attempts were made to restore the Catholic worship; and, hated as Northumberland had been, men were yet heard to say that it would be better to have him again than that religion should be tampered with. Dismayed at this state of things, Mary sent for her friend, the prudent ambassador, and by his advice promised to take no further steps before the meeting of Parliament. She hastily drew up a proclamation granting and enjoining universal toleration, and prohibiting both parties from preaching without licence from herself.

On August 18 a Court of peers sat in Westminster Hall, with the aged Duke of Norfolk for their high steward, to try the Duke of Northumberland, his son the Earl of Warwick, and the Marquis of Northampton, brother of the late Queen Catherine

¹ Froude quotes from Renard's own letter to Charles V. See vi. 51.

Parr, and four others, for high treason. Forty-three years had passed, as some could remember, since the father of Norfolk had been one of the commission which tried Edmund Dudley, the father of Northumberland, for the same crime.¹

The Duke of Northumberland could not deny the charges brought against him, but he submitted two points to the consideration of the court—whether, having acted with a warrant under the Great Seal, he could be lawfully accused of treason; and secondly, whether those peers from whom he had received his commission, and who had concurred in his designs, could sit upon his trial as his judges. Both objections were overruled. The Great Seal, having been, it was said, unlawfully used, under a usurper,² could give no authority. Even if the lords constituting the court had been guilty, they were not under accusation. The three noblemen were all found guilty. Four other persons, one of whom was Sir Andrew Dudley, were also tried and condemned, but only three—Northumberland, with Gates, and Palmer (his reputed counsellors)—were ordered for execution.

Northumberland had professed a bigoted preference for the Protestant faith; but now, in abject terror, he declared himself Catholic, and besought Bishop Gardiner, who visited him in the Tower, to grant him sufficient time for penitence and prayer. Mary's heart was softened by his appeal, but the emperor and his ambassador counselled rigour. Yet, although Northumberland's life was not to be spared, he might be exhibited as a convert.

On August 21, mass was performed in the Tower chapel before these prisoners and certain of the citizens of London; and after the service, the duke, and Lord Northampton and the rest, separately declared with many tears that they would die in the Catholic faith. To the last, Northumberland hoped thus to obtain pardon. The three principal culprits were executed the next day. The more zealous faction of the Protestants was stunned by the apostacy of one who had been so prominent an advocate. Little more disturbance took place on account of the Catholic ritual, except from the refugees. They had come to England on the invitation of Edward's government, and it was neither just nor honourable to send them back to Catholic countries to be exposed again to persecution, but the foreign preachers received orders to leave the country. English Pro-

¹ Edmund Dudley and Richard Empson, the lawyers, hateful to the English people by their exactions, were arraigned on a false charge of treason, and executed in August, 1510.

² The Lady Jane Grey.

testant ministers, on finding that Catholic priests were allowed to preach openly, ventured also in some places to disregard the injunction of silence. But their boldness was speedily punished, and they soon filled those cells in the Tower and other prisons which had lately been occupied by the Catholics. Among these was the excellent Latimer, once Bishop of Worcester, whose courage and honesty had received a meed of praise even from Henry VIII. Latimer might have escaped, but he stood his ground and was sent to the Tower. Archbishop Cranmer also remained for some weeks at Lambeth Palace unmolested, but unpardoned. When his friends asked his advice, he recommended them to go abroad ; but when urged to depart himself while there was yet time, he refused to abandon his post.¹

He must have well understood the danger in which he had placed himself by that fatal signature to the 'letters patent,' and he saw that the English service was being replaced by the Catholic mass. Many expected that he would change, as Northumberland had done ; but in the second week of September Cranmer wrote a letter, many copies of which were circulated through London, offering publicly to defend all the alterations in the public worship of which he had been the author. This was provocation enough for the Council, and Cranmer was immediately committed to the Tower, there to remain with Ridley and Latimer until his fate should be decided.

As soon as the news of Mary's accession reached Rome, the Pope despatched a secret messenger to negotiate, if possible, for the re-union of England with the Catholic Church. Excepting in London and some other large towns, no opposition had been made to the restoration of the Catholic rites. But the English people had no affection for the Papacy. They did not wish to see the monks restored, and the holders of Church property were by no means ready to surrender it. Zealous as Mary was, she could only send the Pope her own assurances of fidelity ; for the present she was in the power of the people, and she feared the popularity of her sister Elizabeth.

Mary's throne was a peculiarly lonely elevation, and it was suggested that she should lose no time in strengthening her position by marriage. The prevailing wish of her subjects had fixed on her cousin, Edward Courtenay, to be the king consort. But Mary heard with much more approval the emperor's advice that she should be united to his son, afterwards Philip II.

¹ Froude, vi. 80.

The recommendations of this alliance were great in Mary's estimation. England, Spain, and Flanders, if united, would hold a decided supremacy in Europe, and a marriage with the heir of her staunch friend, the emperor, would best promote that great desire of her life, the restoration of the Pope's authority throughout England. The greatest private objection to the proposal was the difference in age, Philip being ten years younger than the queen; the greatest fear on public grounds was the decided aversion with which the rumour of her intention was received in England. There was a general dread lest, if Mary should marry a Spanish sovereign, England might sink into a dependent state. Libellous handbills were circulated in London, and the people said they were ready to take up arms to prevent such a marriage.

According to the will of Henry VIII., it was necessary that Mary's marriage should not be disapproved by the Council. In this state of affairs, the lords of the Council, and even the Catholic Bishop Gardiner, sought to defer the coronation till after the meeting of Parliament, when the Act of Henry which had declared Mary illegitimate should be repealed, and a clause might be added to the coronation oath to secure the independence of the English Church. But Mary used all her influence to hasten her coronation, and prevailed.

On October 1, London put on the usual signs of rejoicing, when the queen was conveyed in a chariot covered with cloth of tissue, and drawn by six horses to Westminster Abbey, followed by another chariot covered with cloth of silver, in which sat the Princess Elizabeth and the Lady Anne of Cleves.¹ There was the usual banquet in the great hall. Renard, the imperial ambassador, observed that there seemed to be some secret understanding between the French ambassador and Elizabeth, and it was reported that she complained to Noailles of the weight of her coronet, and that he 'bade her have patience—before long she might exchange it for a crown.'² Yet at this time Elizabeth's chance of the succession must have appeared precarious.

On October 5, Mary met her first Parliament, and both Houses accompanied her to mass. But, although so far acquiescent regarding religious forms, the Commons expressed their determination that the possessors of church-lands should not

¹ Holinshed.

² Froude quotes from Renard's letter. The story has been differently told—that Elizabeth was employed to carry her sister's crown, and whispered to the French ambassador that it was very heavy, on which he replied that it might seem lighter when borne on the head.

be disturbed. While an Act was passed declaring the queen legitimate, Parliament took care that Elizabeth's prospects should not be interfered with. The debate whether the lately-existing Church establishment should be maintained, or the Catholic be restored, lasted eight days, and was decided in favour of Catholicism by a majority which exceeded Gardiner's most sanguine hopes, the votes being 350 against 80. Thus the mass was restored, and the clergy were required to observe the rule of celibacy. Yet, notwithstanding the re-establishment of the Catholic services, the House of Commons did not allow punishment to be inflicted on those who declined to attend them. There was to be in England no Pope, no persecution, no restoration of the abbey lands; in these respects they were far from acquiescing in the queen's wishes. And in order that England might preserve her independence, and not be brought under subjection to Spain, the House voted an address to the queen praying her to choose a husband from her own nobility.

The queen's two chief advisers differed widely on this point. Gardiner, although a bigoted Catholic, was yet a true Englishman at heart. He wished that the 'Six Articles' should be again enacted to suppress heresy, but that religious obligations should be restored by means of the old nobility, not through foreign interference. A Papal dispensation would be required if Mary should marry her cousin Philip, and the English people would not tolerate it. 'Let the queen comply with her people's wishes, marry Courtenay, send Elizabeth to the Tower, and extirpate heresy. These were Gardiner's views.'¹

But Renard's representations of Philip's character had already determined Mary's choice, and her determination became fixed like a religious principle, not to be surrendered except with life. Courtenay, now created Earl of Devon, was indeed unworthy of further promotion; he was vain and dissolute; but there might have been alternatives. Renard consulted Lord Paget, who declared that to send Elizabeth to the Tower would bring Mary into immediate peril. He advised the queen to acknowledge her sister as her presumptive successor; for otherwise, in case of Mary's death, England would be exposed to the claims of France on behalf of the Queen of Scots, or to those of Philip, should he become king consort.

On November 8, Renard presented Mary in the emperor's name with a formal offer of Philip's hand, and requested a distinct answer. Mary immediately repaired to the council-room to obtain the needful consent of her ministers. The lords were

¹ Froude, chap. xxx.

taken by surprise, distrusted each other, and gave some reply which the queen interpreted as acquiescence, and, returning to the ambassador, she told him that she accepted the emperor's proposal.

There was solemn business on hand. On the 13th of the same month Archbishop Cranmer, Lady Jane Grey, Lord Guildford Dudley, and his two brothers were led from the Tower on foot to meet their trial at Guildhall, were found guilty of high treason, and received sentence of death. The queen's intention was still to spare Lady Jane, but to have Cranmer immediately executed; but a Catholic scruple occasioned a necessary respite. As the Pope had given Cranmer the pallium, the archbishop must be degraded by the papal authority before he could be punished with death by a secular tribunal.

Triumphant at the prospect before her, Mary told the imperial ambassador that the melancholy which had depressed her from childhood was passing away, and that she now looked forward to greater happiness than as yet she had ever realised. The House of Commons had meanwhile waited impatiently for the time when their address might be presented. They even talked of dissolving themselves and returning to the country, if the queen did not give them a satisfactory answer.

On November 16, Mary consented to receive their deputation. The Speaker, in an oration which the queen afterwards described as prolix and tiresome, requested her in the name of the Commonwealth to marry, and spoke of the unsettled state of the succession, and the danger of a civil war in case of the queen's death. After expatiating on all the disadvantages of a union with a foreign prince, he exhorted her 'to marry a subject.' It was usual for the lord chancellor to read the royal reply to similar addresses, but Mary—who, although her life had been secluded, was still 'a thorough Tudor'—would trust no one to convey her sentiments. She thanked them for their desire for her marriage, but not for their attempt at dictation. Such language had not been usually addressed by the English Parliament to their sovereigns, and that liberty which private persons enjoyed of consulting their own feelings should not be denied to a sovereign. An unhappy marriage would bring her to the grave. In conclusion she said, 'We have not forgotten our coronation oath. We shall marry as God shall direct our choice, to his honour, and to our country's good.'¹

As the deputation departed, Mary cast a reproach on Bishop Gardiner, whom she knew to be favourable to Courtenay. Gar-

¹ Froude, vi. 125.

diner, having excused his partiality by saying that he had become acquainted with Courtenay in the Tower, replied to the angry queen, 'Choose where you will; your majesty's consort shall find in me the most obedient of his subjects.'

The attempt to control her choice, and the recommendation of Elizabeth as the presumptive heir, excited the queen's anger against her sister. It had been recommended that Elizabeth should marry Courtenay, and it was urged as not unlikely that she might become a Catholic; but Mary passionately exclaimed that even in that case she would never acknowledge her as the next heir. She called Elizabeth a hypocrite and a heretic, and inveighed against her infamous mother as the author of all the calamities which had of late befallen the realm. Even Renard was alarmed at the queen's passion. Mary's popularity was declining through the general dread of the Spanish alliance, and the demonstrations publicly made in favour of Elizabeth excited apprehension of an attempt to place her upon the throne.

Elizabeth, aware of the danger of her position, asked the queen's permission to retire to her country house, and Mary, at Renard's entreaties, not only granted it graciously, but made her a parting present of pearls and sable. The sisters embraced, and Elizabeth retired into the country under the voluntary escort of five hundred gentlemen.

The emperor in the last month of the year sent over the draft of a marriage-treaty, carefully drawn for the unwilling minds of the English. He proposed that his son should bear the title of King of England during the queen's life, but not further, and that the administration of public affairs and the disposal of the revenue should remain with the queen. The queen should share Philip's titles, present and prospective, with a large annual income, and it was promised that the laws and liberties of both the countries should be held inviolate. The queen's Council agreed that the emperor's conditions were reasonable, but added further stipulations, one of which forbade the admission of any foreigner, under any circumstances, to hold a public office in England.

On December 27 an imperial embassy, headed by Count Egmont, arrived in England. The treaty was sent to Brussels to be ratified, and Mary earnestly hoped that the speedy arrival of the dispensation from Rome would enable her marriage to take place before Lent.

The King of France, by his ambassador, expressed discontent at the projected marriage between the Queen of England

and the heir of Spain, lest it might involve England in war with France, and requested Mary to guard against this by a fresh treaty. But Mary refused. After which refusal the French government had no scruples in joining with such of the English as still hoped to form a coalition against the intended marriage.

Seditious pamphlets were widely scattered about, and filled the courtiers with terror. When the queen proposed to send an embassy to escort Philip to England, Lord Derby refused to go, and Lord Bedford declared that he could find no one ready to accompany him. Even Renard sometimes doubted whether the alliance, after all, would be worth the danger attending it. Mary alone remained steadfast in her attachment to a prince whom she had as yet never seen, and talked of raising troops to keep down the disaffected, and of bringing over a thousand horse from Flanders. Rumours were industriously circulated that a large foreign force would speedily arrive to put down the liberties of Englishmen; and the French ambassador held an interview in London with a number of lords and gentlemen, who declared their intention of immediately heading an insurrection in order to depose the queen. The party which now again plunged madly into treason was only strong enough to produce the usual evil consequences of an insurrection. The Duke of Suffolk and his three brothers, the Lords Grey, were about to bring down the vengeance yet impending over the innocent Lady Jane.

Sir Thomas Wyatt undertook to raise Kent, where he had much influence. The Duke of Suffolk and his brothers were ready to raise the midland counties; and Cornwall and Devonshire, which were expected to rise the first, would follow the lead of Carew and Lord Courtenay. The French admiral promised that a fleet should be cruising near the chief harbours on the western coast; and for the sake of their cause the Protestant party were willing to yield to France the very influence they so much dreaded in the case of Spain.¹ But Bishop Gardiner found reason to suspect Courtenay, whose courage was not equal to the undertaking, and the revolt in Devonshire was quashed.

On January 22, Sir Thomas Wyatt assembled his friends at Allington Castle, near Maidstone; the country gentlemen determined to make a rising on the 25th, and separated to prepare the people. Copies of a proclamation were scattered about signifying that the Spaniards were coming to conquer the realm, and calling on all true Englishmen to rise against them.

¹ Froude, vi. 144.

On the morning of January 25 the church bells throughout Kent sounded the alarm. Wyatt's standard was raised at Rochester, and the yeomen and peasantry were rising in arms in all directions. There had been hopes that Sir Robert Southwell, the sheriff of Kent, who had loudly objected to the queen's intended marriage, would have joined the rebellion; but Southwell, Lord Abergavenny, and Sir Thomas Cheyne, remained loyal to the queen, and Lord Cobham, Wyatt's uncle, feared to commit himself.

Abergavenny raised two thousand men and defeated a party of insurgents, but his followers deserted him, and marched to Rochester to join Wyatt. Southwell declared that he could not stop the disaffection; he believed that it would spread to London, and that Mary would be lost.¹

Wyatt, master of Rochester, seized the queen's ships on the Medway. The queen, who had lately irritated her subjects by the threat of foreign troops, had no adequate defence. She applied to the corporation of London, who promised her five hundred men, and she gave the command to the old Duke of Norfolk, whom she immediately despatched to Gravesend. Spies sent by Gardiner had been closely watching Elizabeth; the queen was eagerly looking for an excuse to arrest her, and now in terms seemingly gracious besought her to take shelter in the palace from the disturbances abroad. But Elizabeth replied that illness rendered it impossible for her to travel, and for the present she was safe. A French courier who brought Wyatt offers of assistance was searched, and a copy of Elizabeth's letter to the queen was found upon him, which, although not treasonable, was evidence of a suspicious correspondence.

On the 29th, Norfolk, allured by deceitful representations, ventured to prepare for an attack, but his whole force deserted to the insurgents, and shouts in favour of Wyatt were raised by the London train-bands. Norfolk and the other leaders fled for their lives, while all the guns and stores which they had brought with them fell into the hands of the rebels. The greater number even of Norfolk's private company took service with Wyatt. Lord Cobham still held aloof, although his sons had joined the insurgents. Two thousand followers of Wyatt commenced the storm of Cowling Castle, which surrendered, and Cobham was carried off a prisoner.² On the last day of January the insur-

¹ See Froude, vi. 153.

² Cowling Castle, at Gadshill, near Rochester, was already famous as the residence of Sir John Oldcastle, the companion of Henry V. when Prince.

gents reached Dartford. Their numbers were still insignificant, but their leaders relied on the disaffection of London.

Mary was without defence, and it appeared that if Wyatt had entered London he might have found a welcome from the people. Renard offered assistance from Flanders, but Gardiner still objected to the aid of Flemish soldiers. The queen determined to act for herself. She sent two knights to Dartford to intercede with Wyatt, at whose conduct she said that she 'marvelled.' She offered to appoint persons to confer with him respecting the proposed marriage, saying that if it should appear that the connexion would not be for the good of the realm, she would sacrifice her wishes. Mary was not sincere in this offer, but she gained time. Wyatt, in reply, required that the custody of the Tower and of the queen's person should be given him, and that four of the Council should place themselves in his hands as hostages. In this exigency Mary recommended the emperor's special ambassadors to leave England, as their presence irritated the people, and they obeyed.

She then called on the citizens to assemble at Guildhall, and went herself to address them, attended by Bishop Gardiner and part of the guard. Standing on the steps above the throng, Mary spoke to her subjects with intrepidity which won their applause. She had been told, she said, that the rebellion was caused by dislike of her intended marriage, but the rebel leader had betrayed his true motives, by demanding possession of the Tower of London and of her own person. She stood there, the lawful queen of England, and she appealed to the loyalty of her great city to save her from insult and the city from general havoc. She had supposed that so magnificent an alliance as that which she had in view would have been agreeable also to her people. But marriage was in itself indifferent to her. She would call a Parliament to consider the subject, and if, on mature consideration, the Lords and Commons of England should refuse to approve of the Prince of Spain as a fitting husband for her, she promised, on the word of a queen, that she would think of him no more. The queen's speech had remarkable success. The corporation regained its loyalty, and 25,000 men were enrolled the next day for the protection of the crown and the capital.¹

When Wyatt, after waiting two days at Greenwich, arrived

¹ 'The Tudor princes,' says Mr. Froude, 'were invariably most calm when those around them were panic-stricken.'—'Reign of Henry,' iii. 163. This princely courage was, without doubt, a great cause of their popularity.

at Southwark on February 3, he found the gates on London Bridge closed, and the people prepared for resistance. At the same time news reached London that the efforts of the Duke of Suffolk to raise Leicestershire and excite Coventry to join in the rebellion had failed. Suffolk retreated to Astley Park, his estate, and concealed himself in the hollow of an old tree, where he remained for two winter days and nights without food. Unable longer to bear the cold and hunger, he ventured to warm himself at the cottage-fire of a gamekeeper, who betrayed him, and he and his brothers were soon again prisoners in the Tower. Wyatt, however, remained four days in Southwark, and public opinion still wavered in London. The Council were indignant because the queen had said in her speech to the citizens that the Spanish marriage had not been disapproved by them. The French ambassador's intercepted letter, when deciphered, proved that the great object of the conspiracy had been to dethrone Mary in favour of Elizabeth, and the plot had sympathisers even among the noblemen who surrounded the queen. Irritated and distressed, Mary abandoned her late constitutional tone, and exclaimed to Renard, 'I am the wife of the Prince of Spain; crown, rank, life, all shall go before I will take any other husband.'

But the danger was not yet over. Wyatt, finding it impossible to enter by London Bridge, had desperately resolved to cross the river at Kingston, and thence advance upon London. Part of Kingston Bridge had been broken, and a guard mounted there, but these precautions were unavailing. After midnight on February 7 the news reached the palace that the passage had been forced, and that the insurgents were approaching London. The queen was called from her bed, and was advised by some of her counsellors immediately to take shelter at Windsor; but by Renard's counsel she resolved to stay in London. The Earl of Pembroke, one of Northumberland's party, deserted to Mary, although, as his eldest son had married Lady Catherine, the sister of Lady Jane, the Greys had expected his aid in the present struggle. He had a large share of the the church lands in Wales, which he was determined not to yield, but when at this crisis appealed to by Mary he promised to defend her with his life. His conduct determined many young lords and gentlemen to rally in favour of the queen's cause, and by eight o'clock in the morning more than 10,000 men were in readiness to defend the west end of the city.

Wyatt's march meantime was delayed by the heavy roads, as well as an accident to his ammunition, and when his forces

at last entered Westminster : they were wearied and disorderly.

When he reached Ludgate the gate was shut. His cause was utterly hopeless, and he surrendered. Mary was looking from a window of Whitehall Palace, when Wyatt, Cobham, and four others were borne off in a barge to the Tower.

The danger was now over ; the day of vengeance was at hand. On Ash Wednesday evening, after Wyatt's surrender, a proclamation forbade all persons, on pain of death, to shelter any concerned in the insurrection. All the gaols in London were crowded with prisoners. ' All the surviving members of the families of Grey and Dudley, excepting two young girls, were within the Tower walls, and Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer were packed into a single cell.'¹ The most innocent was doomed to suffer the first. Mary's heart had told her that Lady Jane was guiltless, and therefore ought not to die. Lady Jane had been also in no way concerned in the last commotion ; but Renard told the queen that her execution, to be followed, as he hoped, by that of Elizabeth and Courtenay, would make England more safe for the arrival of him on whom her affection was fixed. Acting on this advice without delay, Mary sent the Catholic priest, Feckenham, afterwards Abbot of Westminster, to inform Lady Jane of the fate awaiting her, and to prepare her for death by conversion, if possible, to the Catholic faith. Lady Jane heard him calmly. The time was, she said, too short for theological discussion, and she wished to decline it. At the good priest's earnest entreaty, Mary granted three more days, and on Monday, February 12, the intrepid and excellent Jane Grey met her fate with heroic fortitude. Her conduct had softened the heart of the lieutenant of the Tower, Sir John Bridges, who begged for some memorial in her writing, which she gave him. She wrote to her father, the Duke of Suffolk, exhorting him not to abandon his Protestant confession at the suggestion of his enemies.² Lord Guildford Dudley was put to death just before her.

The Duke of Suffolk was executed on the 23rd, penitent, as he well might be, for his part in a rebellion which had occasioned so much unavailing misery, but constant, according to his daughter's last wish, in the faith which he had previously professed.

¹ Froude, xxxi.

² ' A letter,' says Mr Froude, ' of exquisite beauty, in which the exhortations of a dying saint are tempered with the reverence of a daughter for her father.' See Froude, vi. 185 ; and Foxe, vi. Dr. Milman describes ' the exquisite native gentleness, modest wisdom, and holy resignation,' of this blameless lady.

There was a general execution of the common prisoners. 'All over London,' wrote the French ambassador, 'the eye met the hideous spectacle of hanging men,' and the executions in Kent were also numerous. The greatest desire of the queen and her advisers was to trace Elizabeth's complicity in the plot; and the imprisonment of several captives was for a time prolonged, that they might be tempted, either by the hope of pardon or the dread of torture, to betray secrets which might justify her apprehension.

Elizabeth had been ill, and when first summoned to attend the court, her physicians had forbidden her to travel. On February 18, she was brought to London by slow stages, and as she entered the city with the covering of her litter thrown back, pale and sorrowful, but with an expression of majesty and indignation, crowds followed her to Westminster with anxious sympathy. Mary refused to see the sister whom she had resolved if possible to destroy, and rooms were allotted to Elizabeth in the palace of Whitehall, now intended for her temporary prison. The emperor and his ambassador insisted that 'justice' should be done on her and Courtenay without delay. If the people were indignant, steps might be afterwards taken to pacify them; but the Lords of the Council still insisted that the forms of law should be preserved. The lords had at length agreed to offer no further opposition to the queen's marriage. Gardiner resolved to devote his efforts to the restoration of the Church, and some who would still have been hostile were influenced by the presents and promises of the emperor. Opposition being withdrawn, Renard, in the queen's presence, asked the Lords to allow the completion of the contract of marriage. They replied that after the defeat of the rebellion no further violence need be apprehended, unless from the French cruisers. A hint reached Philip, however, that it would be prudent as a precaution to bring with him his own cook and butler.

On March 6, the ambassadors were conducted into the presence-chamber, where Mary, kneeling before the sacred memorials of her faith, solemnly declared that care for her realm and for her subjects' welfare, had alone decided her, and then rising, she gave her hand to Count Egmont as the representative of the Prince of Spain. Bishop Gardiner pronounced the blessing, and the proxy-marriage was complete. In thus acting before she had again assembled Parliament, Mary broke the promise she had voluntarily made at Guildhall. It was hoped that sufficient evidence had been extracted to justify Elizabeth's arrest, and Gardiner urged that the princess should immediately

be sent to the Tower; but four lords still declared that there was no evidence to justify the act; whereupon the bishop asked which of them would be responsible for her safe detention?

On March 18, Elizabeth's attendants having been removed and a hundred soldiers stationed below her window, two noblemen waited on her to acquaint her with the queen's orders and to attend her to a barge which had been prepared to convey her to the Tower. Elizabeth must long have apprehended this; the terrible name of the Tower must have seemed to her like a death-knell, but she entreated the lords to allow her time to write a letter to the queen, which may still be read in the State Paper Office, and the writing shows no sign of agitation.¹ While Elizabeth wrote, the tide turned, the barge could not pass the bridge, and it was Palm Sunday morning when she left the palace for the Tower. Her letter received, of course, no response from Mary. It was raining when the barge stopped at the Traitors' Gate of the Tower. The associations of the place overcame Elizabeth for a few minutes, and she at first refused to land there. Immediately afterwards, sharply rejecting proffered aid, she sprang out upon the mud, and exclaimed to the soldiers on guard that she prayed them to bear her witness that she came there 'no traitor, but as true a woman to the Queen's Majesty as any living.' As Elizabeth approached the apartment allotted to her, the heavy doors were locked and barred, and Lord Sussex, who accompanied her, felt appalled at the danger of her position. Might not a princess for whose death the queen was so anxious be removed by murder? The Lords determined to remonstrate, and Lord Paget waited on Mary with a declaration that already too much blood had been shed to expiate the late rebellion, and that, if she attempted any more executions, he and his friends would interfere.

On April 2, Parliament met. Gardiner addressed the assembly on the late rebellion, and proposed that an Act should be passed emphatically declaring the queen's authority as equal to that of a king. The consent of Parliament was required to her marriage articles, and it was submitted to their consideration whether the privilege of bequeathing the crown by will, which had been accorded to Henry VIII., should not be granted also to Mary. The bill for the queen's authority passed without opposition, amidst the silence of those who still disapproved of the Spanish marriage. But extreme irritation was shown at the proposal respecting the succession, aimed, as it obviously was, at Elizabeth.

¹ Froude, p. 206.

Wyatt had been kept in prison in hope of inducing him to confess Elizabeth's complicity; but it was now determined no longer to delay his execution. On the scaffold he raised his voice to assure the people that both the Lady Elizabeth and Courtenay were guiltless of any part in the late rising. The confessor, Weston, shouted, 'Believe him not, good people, he confessed otherwise before the Council.' But Wyatt again protested that his last words were true, and London soon rang with the cry that Courtenay and Elizabeth had been cleared by Wyatt's dying speech. There was then no hope of a legal conviction of Elizabeth. The judges decided that there was no evidence against her, and the court feared to provoke Lord William Howard, who was at the head of the navy, and might, if offended at the treatment of Elizabeth, join with the French against the queen.¹

On April 17, Sir Nicholas Throgmorton was tried at the Guildhall on a charge of being concerned in the rebellion. He defended himself with much spirit, and the jury, with still greater courage, returned a verdict of 'Not Guilty.'

The judge warned them to reconsider the case, but they were resolute to do their best to restrain further punishment on account of the past rebellion.

The queen felt their verdict to be injurious to her authority, and insisted on their punishment. The jurors were accordingly thrown into prison, and were not liberated till the following winter, when they were set free, after paying a ruinous fine.

In April, Gardiner introduced into Parliament three bills, the passing of either of which would give him the power to persecute.

The first of these would have re-enacted 'the Six Articles,' that 'bloody Act' passed in 1539, 'in spite of Cranmer's brave opposition,' for the abolition of diversity of opinions. But that Act had still 'so bad a name that the bill for its restoration was dropped after the first reading.'² The bills for re-enacting the statute of Henry IV. which condemned heretics to be burned to death passed the Commons and was read twice in the Upper House, but it was warmly opposed by Paget; and a dissolution, advocated by Renard, saved further decision. The Peers assured the queen that they had no desire to shield heresy, but that heretics could still be punished by the existing common law.

Lord Paget protested against the iniquity of putting men to death for their opinions, but was more successful in his

¹ Courtenay withdrew to Italy, and died at Venice in 1556.

² It had been repealed by the Duke of Somerset in 1547. See Froude.

arguments against Gardiner's proposed bill for restoring episcopal jurisdiction in a stronger form, when he spread the alarm that the spiritual courts would interfere with the present possessors of the abbey lands.

The 'Bishops' Bill' was thrown out on the third reading. Renard counselled the queen not to allow Gardiner to be too hasty in religious reform, for fear that the country might not be a safe residence for Philip. In May, accordingly, Parliament was dissolved without any further extension of the power of the Church.

Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer had been called before a committee of convocation at Oxford; they were sentenced to the punishment of heretics. Six Protestant ministers taken from London prisons were also tried and condemned at Cambridge; but that power which Gardiner desired was not yet granted by Parliament. Elizabeth could now no longer remain a prisoner in the Tower; the country would not quietly see her ill-treated; so she was dismissed to temporary confinement at Woodstock.

On May 19, Elizabeth left the Tower with almost as heavy a heart as when she entered it, but the people believed her set at liberty; and, as her barge passed up the river, Mary is said to have heard with much displeasure three salutes fired as a sign of rejoicing. The queen had been grievously troubled in preparing for the safe reception of a prince who had not yet sent her any letter or token of regard.

When the English fleet was on the eve of sailing for Spain, the sailors broke out into mutiny, from dislike of the service. The prince declined to trust himself to an English convoy, and his departure from Spain was again delayed.

The University of Oxford came forward in this time of trouble to congratulate the queen on the restoration through her of life and light to England. And at last came the news for which she had so long sighed; Philip had embarked, accompanied by an escort of 6,000 soldiers. The Spanish fleet of a hundred and fifty ships sailed from Corunna at the beginning of July. The voyage was tedious, and the Spaniards apprehended an attack as they passed the French coasts on their way. It was not till July 20 that the flotilla safely anchored in Southampton Water. Mary was already approaching Winchester, and almost all the peers of England were either in attendance upon her or waiting at Southampton; for when the English lords withdrew their opposition they determined to receive the husband of their sovereign with befitting honour. No sooner had the prince's vessel anchored, than a barge con-

taining several of the most eminent nobles put forth to welcome him. As he stepped on the landing-place all the spectators fell on their knees, and Lord Shrewsbury, with what appears now inconvenient haste, promptly presented him with the Order of the Garter. A horse was brought for the prince's use, with a saddlecloth of crimson velvet embroidered with gold and pearls. The knight who presented it made a Latin speech; Philip could not speak either French or English. According to his habitual custom in all his changes and employments, the prince went to Southampton Church to return thanks for his safe arrival. He afterwards partook of a public entertainment, drank ale, to which he was unaccustomed, and appeared desirous of setting an example of courtesy to the Spaniards who accompanied him. The drenching rain next day gave a poor prospect of comfort to the visitors from sunny Spain, when Philip, attended by a great cavalcade, proceeded to Winchester, where Mary awaited him at the bishop's palace with much anxiety.

On July 25, the festival of St. James, the patron-saint of Spain, the marriage was celebrated in Winchester Cathedral with unusual magnificence. The emperor, fearing lest it might be beneath the dignity of the Queen of England to marry one below the kingly rank, had resigned to his son the crown of Naples and Duchy of Milan.¹

Several days were spent at Winchester in festivities before the royal pair travelled slowly to Windsor and London.

Parliament was convoked for November, the voters having been specially desired to make choice of men 'of a wise, grave, and Catholic sort,' an instruction copied, it is said, from an old form under Henry VII. Although frequent signs of irritation still occurred in London, the elections were altogether in the queen's favour. On the 12th, Parliament was, as usual, opened by Gardiner, who declared the intention of the government to proceed in the re-establishment of the Catholic faith. The first Act passed repealed the attainder of Cardinal Pole, whom the Pope designed to send over as his legate so soon as he could safely enter England. Three commissioners were deputed to go to Brussels to invite the cardinal's return. On November 24 he arrived at Whitehall, and was welcomed by Philip and Mary with great affection, the queen declaring that his arrival gave her as much joy as the possession of her kingdom. The Lords and Commons were soon afterwards summoned to Whitehall, where Pole was placed on the right hand of the king and

¹ Lingard, vii. 173.

queen, who were seated under a canopy of state, and was introduced as the papal ambassador.

On the first Sunday in Advent, St. Paul's Church was attended by a more august assembly than had ever before been chronicled, to witness the reception of Cardinal Pole as the Pope's legate, who was heralded by the lord mayor and met by the lord chancellor and the bishops. King Philip came, attended by a hundred English, a hundred Spanish, and the like number of German guards, and by a vast retinue of noblemen and knights. Bishop Gardiner preached against the heresy of renouncing the papal supremacy, in which, however, he was obliged to pass over his own conduct under Henry.¹

Both Houses of Parliament agreed to present a petition to the king and queen, requesting their majesties to intercede with the Pope for the removal of the interdict. The petition was solemnly presented the next day at Whitehall, where the Parliament again assembled. It was St. Andrew's Day, November 30, and good Catholics fondly hoped that it would be remembered in all coming time by Englishmen with gratitude. The petition having been presented, and exhortations delivered, Cardinal Pole pronounced the absolution before the queen, king, and Parliament, all kneeling, and the ceremony ended with the 'Te Deum' in the royal chapel. The rejoicings in London were far exceeded by those at Rome; but Church property in England still remained secularised, and if restitution had been enforced, England would still have preferred to remain without a papal blessing. The lawyers in Parliament declared that it was not within the power of any spiritual authority to change the disposition of landed property.

Gardiner's attempt to revive the old persecuting laws was, however, triumphant. There was still a small party in the House of Lords who 'fought the battle of humanity,' but they failed, and the lives of the Protestants were in their enemies' hands. But the legate was not satisfied while the Church lands remained in the hands of their new owners.²

Mary was also disappointed. She wished to secure the regency for Philip should she leave any child to survive her, or, if otherwise, to make Philip her successor; and, as the first step, she requested the House of Commons to sanction his coronation. But to this they returned a unanimous refusal.

Throughout the whole Catholic reaction there was a constant determination on the part of Parliament to guard

¹ Dr. Milman's 'St. Paul's.' p. 240.

² Froude, vi. 295-297.

Elizabeth's claims, and not to allow of the future sovereignty of Philip. On January 15, 1555, Philip and Mary dissolved the Parliament, with evident signs of dissatisfaction. Mary's first Parliament had restored the celebration of the Catholic rites, but had protested against the Spanish marriage. The second sanctioned the marriage, but went no further. The third was so influenced as to grant to the Catholic chancellor the full powers of persecution. But still Parliament had maintained the independence of the English law-courts, and had forbidden any tampering with the succession. England was not yet thoroughly servile, and there was hope of a better future. An amnesty was now granted for past political offences, and those prisoners who remained in confinement on account of Wyatt's conspiracy were released, but an attempt was resolved upon to expel heresy from England once for all. When there appeared to be a chance of preventing Mary's accession, Bishop Ridley and other Protestant preachers had not spared their pulpit eloquence against her. But the nation preferred the path of loyalty, hated Northumberland, and cared little about the difference of worship. When Northumberland, before dying, abjured the Protestantism which he had previously so warmly maintained, many said that the Protestants could not stand the fiery trial of their faith. This was now to be proved. The bishops were directed to see that the clergy were reconciled to Rome, and to enforce the acquiescence of the laity in the Catholic creed. A register was to be kept in every diocese, and orders were given that all recusants should be proceeded against with the utmost severity.

Bishop Gardiner, supported by Bonner, Bishop of London, and others, formed a court in Southwark, before which Hooper, late Bishop of Gloucester, and Rogers, a canon of St. Paul's, were brought up for judgment. Hooper, who during his residence as bishop had shown very uncommon kindness and charity, had been now for eighteen months in squalid and noisome confinement in the Fleet prison. These two confessors were called up, not for trial, but for sentence. They were allowed twenty-four hours to determine whether to recant, with life as their reward, or to meet death at the stake.

Without hesitation, they prepared for death. They were first degraded from the priesthood in the usual form, being clothed in priestly garments which were severally removed, under the direction of the Bishop of London. It was in vain that Rogers besought that he might take farewell of his wife; as inexorably denied him. It was held in abomination by

Catholics that a clergyman should be married. Rogers was burnt to death in Smithfield; Hooper at Gloucester, in the presence of several thousand people. Others were put to the same death in the country. 'The enemies of the Church,' said Gardiner, 'must submit or die.' Remonstrance against such cruelty came, however, from the quarter from which there was the least reason to expect it. Philip feared lest he might be held responsible, and the temper of the nation might well give rise to misgiving.

On the Sunday after Hooper's martyrdom, Philip's chaplain preached in the royal presence against these executions, and denounced the tyranny of the bishops. Philip was impatient to leave Mary and return to Spain. The constancy of the martyrs had already excited the admiration and sympathy of the people. The Protestants had been driven from Flanders by the cruelty of the imperial government, but the imperial ambassador perceived that these 'barbarous punishments' had no good effect in England. Did they not imply that Catholicism could not be maintained by argument?¹

Renard used every argument to detain the king yet awhile in England. He reminded Philip of the emperor's design in the marriage, viz. to counterpoise the ascendancy of France, which was allied with Scotland. He acknowledged that Philip might naturally wish that Mary had been more agreeable, but she was very virtuous, and should be assisted by kindly counsel. It would be dangerous to attempt to set aside the claim of Elizabeth as heir-presumptive to the throne. Renard advised that, if possible, a husband should be found for her; at all events, that Philip should see the princess before leaving England, and declare himself her friend.

After Elizabeth had been a year in confinement at Woodstock, she was, in July, 1555, summoned to court. The courtiers were eager to congratulate her, but Mary required her to sue humbly for forgiveness. Elizabeth would make no apology which could be interpreted as a confession of guilt. The queen at length reluctantly allowed her to be at liberty, but forbade her the court, and sent Mrs. Ashley, Elizabeth's favourite attendant, to the Fleet, and three other members of her household to the Tower. Mary was wretched and ill; disappointed in her fond hope of offspring, she had trusted to obtain Heaven's favour by the immolation of heretics, but the cruelty to which she had urged the bishops was fast bringing the people back to Protestantism. Philip would stay with her no longer, urging that his

¹ Renard to Philip. See Froude's *History*, vi. 330.

presence was required on the Continent. He left her particular directions in writing, which he also enjoined those of his attendants who remained in England to observe, that the Princess Elizabeth should be kindly treated.

Philip had been little more than a year in England, and promised speedily to return, but in this hope Mary was disappointed.

Left alone with a Parliament less favourable to her views than the former, and shortly afterwards deprived of her chief minister, Bishop Gardiner, who died in the November following, Mary was solitary and wretched, suffering from an incurable disease, and, in her blind zeal to bring all her subjects within the Catholic pale, she devoted herself to 'the horrible crusade' which she had undertaken against the heretics, in which the papal legate, Cardinal Pole, was her chief adviser.¹

When Mary came to the throne she inclined so much to mercy that she would have spared even Northumberland; but now, by persistence in severity, she alienated the hearts of her people, and paved the way for a Protestant reaction. When Elizabeth passed through London just before the opening of Parliament in October, public enthusiasm was conspicuously shown in her favour. In September a commission, over which the Bishop of Gloucester presided, sat at Oxford to try Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer for obstinate heresy. The late archbishop was arraigned both for contempt of the Pope's authority, and for defiance of the statutes, as testified in his marriage, his writings, and his preaching. Cranmer defended himself; he was cited to appear before the Pope within eighty days, but, being still in prison, obedience to the citation was impossible.

Ridley and Latimer were called up for judgment. They had remained in prison more than two years, steadfast in their opinions, believing that the last trial of their faith was at hand.

Latimer, now an old man of eighty, appeared before his judges in an old frieze gown, with a leathern belt to which his Testament was attached. Both were sentenced to die by fire on October 16, at a spot just outside of Oxford, where it was expected that Cranmer would witness their sufferings. When the sheriff's officer came to summon them, Ridley had just finished a long letter to the queen, to entreat that persons to whom, when Bishop of London, he had granted leases,

¹ Mr. Froude shows that Pole took the leading part in the persecution, from which Card has endeavoured to exonerate him.

might continue in possession, or, if not, be recompensed out of his own confiscated property. Thinking for others on the very brink of his appalling fate, Ridley, when bound to the stake, begged the noblemen in attendance to intercede for these people with the queen. It was a comfort to these heroic men that each could encourage the other to fortitude. 'Be of good comfort, Master Ridley,' cried Latimer, amidst the cracking of the flames, 'we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.' A friend, wishing to shorten their sufferings, tied a bag of powder round the neck of each. Latimer soon became insensible, Ridley's sufferings were more protracted.

But even greater anguish, that of the mind, awaited the deposed archbishop.

We cannot wonder if Mary held Cranmer in peculiar abhorrence. He had pronounced the decree of divorce which exiled her mother, and by which she had been declared illegitimate; he had sanctioned and celebrated her father's marriage with Anne Boleyn; had stood sponsor for Elizabeth; and, last and worst of all, had been persuaded by the crafty Northumberland and the young Protestant king, whom he loved, to put his hand to that instrument which awarded the crown of England to Jane Grey.

If Cranmer had expiated his political sins by death on the scaffold, none, probably, would have thought the doom iniquitous; but Mary would rather condemn him for his crimes against the Pope and the Catholic Church than for his treason against herself. After his trial and that summons to Rome where he had no power to present himself, Cranmer wrote to the queen, not craving for mercy, which he did not seem to expect, but remonstrating against English subjects being held answerable to the jurisdiction of any foreign power.

A mock trial was instituted at Rome, and the Pope pronounced the final sentence, that, it having been proved against Thomas Cranmer that he had followed the teachings of Wyclif and Luther, and had written in support of heretical opinions, in which he still obstinately persisted, he should be deposed from his office, and delivered to the punishment of the civil tribunal.¹ Fortified by this authority, the Bishops Thirlby and Bonner went down to Oxford in February to complete the work. The ceremony of degradation was gone through; Cranmer was arrayed in his archiepiscopal dress, the articles of which were one by one taken from him, while Bonner made a taunting speech, during

¹ Froude, chap. xxxiii.

which the Bishop of Ely, an old friend, is said to have shed tears. He was then clothed in a beadle's threadbare gown and a tradesman's cap, and Bonner told him 'he was no more a lord,' and so he returned to prison. Some say that hopes were entertained that Cranmer might yet recant, and that the Dean of Christchurch and others kindly expostulated with him, urging that he, who had once been a Catholic, might yet prolong his life by submitting to the head of that Church in which the great majority of good persons still lived and died.¹ He received a long letter from Cardinal Pole, who took credit for writing to one whom it was scarcely then lawful to address, but whom he ardently desired to bring back to the Church which he had deserted. Cranmer is said to have been 'physically timid.' The near approach of the agony which he had lately seen others suffer unnerved him. With the thought, which some friends suggested, that he might yet live many years should he subscribe, doubts might intervene whether indeed he could have mistaken the right path to heaven. He submitted, and shortly after his degradation signed a short paper signifying that he consented 'to take the Pope for chief head of the Church of England so far as God's laws and the customs of this realm will permit.' This paper was no sooner despatched to be forwarded immediately to the queen, than he wished to recall it, but then again signed similar words. His enemies had now the advantage over him, worked upon his fears, and drew from him more complete and humiliating confessions of penitence for his past conduct. He was left in prison for a month; there was no intention of sparing his life, but only of obtaining his dying declaration in favour of the Church from which he had been so conspicuous a seceder.

When Hooper and others were brought to the stake, the pardons proffered to them on condition of recantation had been ostentatiously set forth, but for Cranmer the sole grace was permission to speak to the people before his execution; for the authorities assured themselves that, like the Duke of Northumberland, he would speak as a repentant member of the orthodox Church. The morning of March 21, on which it was fixed that Cranmer should die, was stormy, and it was arranged that the sermon which was usually preached near the stake should be delivered in St. Mary's Church, where a high stage was erected

¹ Strype relates various kinds of friendly treatment shown to Cranmer. 'He was entertained with good fare. They got him to play bowls with them. Sometimes they accosted him with arguments, sometimes by flatteries.' Froude does not deny this, but says that the time alluded to was very soon over.—See Froude, vi. 407; Strype, p. 383.

on which to exhibit the condemned archbishop to the vast assembly of peers, doctors, and men of all ranks, who thronged into the church. Dr. Cole, provost of Eton, who was the preacher, explained fully the crimes for which Cranmer, although he had announced his return to the true faith, must still suffer death—that he had been an early promoter of religious innovations, had given his opinion in favour of the divorce of Henry from his first wife, and had greatly encouraged heresy. Therefore the congregation were desired to take warning how one who, as archbishop, had been the chief of the Council, and ‘the second person in the realm,’ was now in a more miserable position than the poorest wretch living. Yet, as Cranmer had returned to the true faith, he was assured that the fiery trial might be to him a short passage to the joys of heaven, and for his comfort he was promised that a dirge should be sung for him in every church in Oxford. After a solemn conclusion, the preacher turned to Cranmer, charging him to make a true exposition of his faith. ‘I will do it,’ replied Cranmer.

But far different were the words poured forth from the platform to the address expected by the Catholic divines!

Beginning with a humble confession of many sins and weaknesses, for which he besought the prayers of the assembly, Cranmer exhorted them to turn their hearts to mutual love and kindness, and loyalty to their sovereign; and then, coming to the great thing that troubled his conscience more than any other thing that ever he said or did in his life, declared that since his degradation, for fear of death, to save his life if it might be, he had written and signed papers contrary to the truth which he thought in his heart. When his astonished hearers could recover from their first indignant surprise, efforts were made to stifle his words, and he was borne along towards the stake which was placed just without the walls. It appears to be far less difficult to meet certain death, however terrible, than to express convictions which must ensure that destiny. The archbishop, so lately timid and vacillating, even a dissembler, now stood forth the courageous martyr. As the hope of life had vanished, so also had the fear of death. He approached the stake, we are told, ‘with a cheerful countenance,’ and shook hands with his friends. Some still called on him to ‘recant,’ but, extending his right arm to the flame, Cranmer exclaimed that the hand which had signed the false attestation should first suffer punishment. His death was speedy. A kind Catholic bystander, whose words give evidence of the true Christian spirit which may exist amidst the bigotry of creeds, said of this

martyrdom, 'His friends sorrowed for love, his enemies for pity, strangers for a common kind of humanity, whereby we are bound to one another.' The next day the legate, Cardinal Pole, was appointed to the see of Canterbury.¹ The government was from this time conducted chiefly through the legate and a small number of zealous Catholics, under whose direction the persecution of the Protestants, chiefly of the lower class, was ruthlessly carried out.

The queen had become extremely unpopular, and many feared that Philip might still attempt to extinguish English liberty by means of Spanish troops. Several men of rank fled to France, where the king gave them encouragement. Mary remonstrated in vain, and war ensued, France, as usual, aided by Scotland. The war entailed demands upon the exchequer which were not readily supplied, and a forced loan was obtained, but not without outcry and resistance.² Warnings had frequently been given of the insecurity of Calais, Guisnes, and Ham, which formed the sole remaining possession of the English on the Continent.

In December, Lords Grey and Wentworth wrote urgently to the queen for reinforcements, which were prepared too late. On January 6, Calais surrendered to the Duke of Guise; the garrison and inhabitants, 5,000 in all, were permitted to return to England, while Wentworth and fifty others remained prisoners. Guisnes held out for a few days longer under Lord Grey. On January 20, 1558, the last remnant of the conquests of the Plantagenet kings passed into the possession of France.

Although Calais had been a constant expense to the English government, it was esteemed an honour to England to possess it, and great was the grief and humiliation of the queen and her subjects at its loss.³ After the fall of Calais the English feared a French invasion, and lamented that their fortresses were without arms, and their ships unmanned—all Mary's spare revenues had been devoted to the rebuilding of abbeys, and to the support of the Catholic Church.

The country was exhorted to arm. Every able-bodied man between sixteen and sixty years was commanded to be ready to join the army when called upon, under pain of death.

The queen applied in person to the citizens of London for a loan, whereupon the corporation lent the government twenty thousand pounds at 12 per cent.

¹ Froude, vi. 430.

² Froude, vi. 486.

³ A few weeks after Guise's victory, the marriage of the Dauphin and the young Queen of Scots was consummated.

The military preparations were carried forward, but without spirit. The frequent burnings of the Protestants produced despondency and excited indignation; and although the queen forbade the citizens to show sympathy towards heretics, they continued to testify affection for the sufferers.

Thirteen Protestants who had been arrested at a prayer-meeting were condemned to death by Bishop Bonner; but when, on June 28, seven of these were burnt at Smithfield, the spectators manifested so much indignation that the bishop dared not bring the others to open execution. They did not, however, escape from his vengeance. Bonner tried them privately in his house at Fulham, and they were burnt to death at Brentford in the darkness of night—a deed which is said to have excited more hatred than any other act committed by him.¹ In the spring of 1557, Philip paid England a short visit. In the autumn of the next year, on hearing that Mary was attacked by epidemic fever, he sent over an envoy to express to her his desire that she would offer no opposition to Elizabeth's succession.

Painful as this advice must have been to Mary, she submitted as usual implicitly to her husband's will, only urgently requesting that her debts might be paid, and expressing her hope that there might be no change of religion. The envoy, De Feria, visited Elizabeth, enlarged on the good offices of his master towards her, and bade her fear no opposition. Elizabeth received him graciously, and admitted that she had, when a prisoner, been benefited by Philip's intercession. But she plainly declared to the Count that the people had been her best friends; it was to them she owed her preservation, and she was determined to be ever the friend of the English people. De Feria reported to his master that he feared 'in religion Elizabeth would not be right.' He suspected that the ladies who attended her inclined to Protestantism, and that Sir William Cecil would be her chief secretary.

On November 16, Mary expired, after having received with quiet fortitude the last rites of the Church. She had reigned little more than five years; cheerless years they must have been, without the support for which her heart longed from a husband's affection, and hoping in vain for an heir who would perpetuate the faith to which she was so ardently attached.

¹ Froude, chap. xxxv., and Foxe. The queen had by a proclamation threatened death to any persons who should speak to heretics with kindness when on their way to execution. Sir Richard Poxall, sheriff, reprieved a man in Hampshire who recanted, for which lenity he was sent to prison, and the man was burnt.

Although striving to act right, according to her principles, she died under general detestation, excited by the cruelty perpetrated in her name. The higher classes had been generally spared in this reign, but the persecution fell on artisans and husbandmen, on poor girls and boys, who knew not the respective merits of different creeds. Nearly three hundred persons were burnt at the stake during three years. 'By imprisonment,' said Lord Burleigh, 'by torment, by fire, almost the number of 400 were, in their various ways, lamentably destroyed,' and without avail, as regarded the advancement of the Roman Catholic faith.

On the same day as the queen, died Cardinal Pole. Some writers have tried to show that Pole was lenient towards the Reformers. His own register proves the contrary. There is also a royal brief, which Pole must have sanctioned, addressed to Bishop Bonner, desiring that 'certain manifest heretics' should be 'really burned with fire in public view.' This brief is dated November 13, four days before Mary's death and that of the cardinal. 'Was this,' asks Dean Milman, 'her last act, this recognition of all Bonner's terrible sentences?'²

¹ Froude, vi. 533.

² Milman's 'St. Paul's,' p. 254.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ELIZABETH.

A.D. 1558--1603.

It was about an hour before daybreak on November 17 when Mary expired. Parliament opened, as was then usual, at eight in the morning, and at that hour the Commons were summoned to the House of Lords to be officially informed by the chancellor of the change of sovereignty. A procession was formed to proclaim Queen Elizabeth before the palace of Westminster, and at the great cross in Cheapside. The city bells, which six years before had hailed Mary's accession, were accompanied by the exultant cheers of a rejoicing people. The executions in Smithfield had rendered Mary's government unpopular in London, where the majority was Protestant, and both parties were ready to express their satisfaction.

Philip of Spain, when aware of Mary's approaching death, directed his ambassador to repair to Hatfield to assure Elizabeth of his protection, and to incline her, should it be possible, in favour of the Roman Catholic faith. During Mary's reign there had been no safety for those who refused to conform to the established ritual, and Elizabeth had accordingly attended mass; but, as the Spanish ambassador had already informed Philip, her friends were chosen chiefly among Protestants, and, as he expected, Sir William Cecil, who had been Edward's secretary — 'a prudent and virtuous man, although a heretic' — became her principal adviser. On Saturday night the Privy Council and chief statesmen assembled at Hatfield, and there, on Sunday, November 20, the new queen made her first royal speech, and appointed Cecil to be her secretary.¹

When Elizabeth was on her way to London, two days later,

¹ Sir William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burleigh, was the principal adviser of Elizabeth until his death in 1598.

she was met at Highgate by the bishops, who were all allowed to kiss her hand, excepting Bonner, whose touch she avoided. The last time that she had travelled on that road she was carried to town in a litter to meet charges brought against her by those who tried to implicate her in Wyatt's treason. Elizabeth and her advisers now saw the importance of restraining the hasty zeal of the Protestant clergy, who came forth from their hiding-places; and on the first opportunity, the queen's almoner addressed the people from St. Paul's Cross, bidding them to be quiet and orderly. A proclamation was issued forbidding any change in religious services unless sanctioned by Parliament.

In London and the towns the trading and middle class was chiefly Protestant, but elsewhere a great part both of the nobility and the lower classes, with the exception of those who had been enriched by the transference of the abbey lands, still adhered to the faith of Rome.¹ There was danger, if Elizabeth's Protestantism were too offensive, that the Pope might excommunicate her and incite the Catholic powers to invade England. The Act by which Parliament had attainted Anne Boleyn was still unrepealed, and might therefore be appealed to. Elizabeth's position was indeed singularly lonely; she was nearly the last of her race; her nearest kinswoman was Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland and Dauphiness of France, ready, moreover, if encouraged by the English Roman Catholics, immediately to claim the crown of England. The will of Henry VIII. had given a preference to the line of Suffolk over that of Stuart, but Elizabeth constantly refused to consider the Lady Catherine Grey, sister of the late unfortunate Lady Jane, as the next in succession.²

The connexion of Mary Stuart with France was so far fortunate for England that it abated the desire of the English Catholics for the accession of one whose rule might involve England in servile dependence. Philip of Spain was, from his aversion to French ascendancy, the more inclined to continue the ally of England, and he expressed to Elizabeth before her coronation, in a lordly and reserved style,

¹ Mr. Froude has confirmed the assertion made by the Catholic historians, that the majority of the English people were Roman Catholic at Elizabeth's accession. Hallam gives a long note on the subject, expressing his opinion that during the queen's reign the Catholics soon became a minority.—'Constitutional History,' i. 176.

² 'At the beginning of this reign,' says Hallam, 'after the death of the Duchess of Suffolk, Lady Catherine Grey was by statute law the presumptive heiress of the crown; but, according to hereditary descent, Mary Queen of Scots, grand-daughter of Margaret Tudor, was the next in succession to Elizabeth.'—'Constitutional History,' i. 123.

his willingness to become her husband. She had been indebted to the King of Spain for his protection during the persecution which she had lately undergone, and was cautious not to offend the sovereign who was at present her sole ally. She, therefore, declined the proposal with politeness, expressing respect for Philip's prudence and a desire for the continuance of his friendship. But the Spanish ambassador gave her to understand that the king's friendship would be regulated by her conduct in regard to religion. Shortly afterwards he married the Princess Elizabeth of France, the destined bride of his son, Don Carlos.

In London no manifestation of regard was wanting when Elizabeth passed from Westminster to make a short stay at that ancient palace of the Tower, which four years previously she had entered through the Traitors' Gate. The Thames was at this period the most convenient highway, and the principal residences of the nobility were on its banks; but when, on January 14, the queen proceeded to Westminster for her coronation, she was drawn through the streets in a sumptuous chariot, attended by a long train of lords and ladies on horseback. On leaving the Tower, where she had suffered so much anxiety, Elizabeth expressed heartfelt gratitude for her past deliverance. Triumphal arches were thrown across the streets; but some observers have recorded how much the pervading Protestant spirit had altered the designs since the time, six and twenty years before, when the mother of Elizabeth passed through London for a similar ceremony. The pageants had then been chiefly adapted from Pagan fictions; but the religious controversies of Edward's reign and the persecutions under Mary had 'put to flight Apollo and the Muses;' and the sober Puritans displayed the Cardinal Virtues arrayed against Ignorance, Superstition, and Vice, and a figure of Time was seen leading forward his daughter Truth to offer to the queen an English Bible, which she accepted with becoming respect.¹ 'How many nosegays,' says Holinshed, 'did her Grace receive at poor women's hands! How many times stayed she her chariot when she saw any simple body offer to speak to her Grace!' Some difference of opinion had already become apparent among the higher clergy. The Liturgy in its English form had been read before Parliament, and Heath, the Archbishop of York, declined to officiate at the coronation. Several of the sees were vacant, and 'the gorgeous robes of Bishop Bonner were borrowed to

¹ See Miss Aikin's 'Court of Queen Elizabeth,' i. 249.

attire Oglethorpe, of Carlisle, the sole officiating bishop.¹ Cardinal Pole, the last Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, had died immediately after Queen Mary, and several months elapsed before Archbishop Parker succeeded him in that office.² At this period popular feeling was much influenced by the pulpit and the stage. Mary had issued an injunction condemning the plays which aspersed herself and Philip, and ridiculed the ceremonial of their religion; and Elizabeth now forbade by proclamation all theatrical performances until the next Hallowmass, October 31.³

On January 25, Elizabeth met her first Parliament. The House of Commons was for the most part zealously attached to Protestantism, and the first and most pressing subject was the regulation of religion, to which was added an earnest recommendation to the queen that she should, both for her own protection and that of the realm, consent to a speedy marriage. Elizabeth returned a kind answer to the appeal, but expressed preference for a single life. The two most prominent candidates for her hand were the Archduke Charles, son of the Emperor of Germany, and Lord Robert Dudley, whom she afterwards created Earl of Leicester. A negotiation, which was carried on for two or three years, respecting the queen's union with the archduke was finally relinquished by reason of his difference of religion—an impediment which obstructed all similar proposals from foreign princes. For Leicester the queen felt a strong partiality, of which he was unworthy, and which during several years marred her happiness, and excited the apprehensions of her wisest advisers.⁴

In order to adjust religious differences, a theological conference was held at Westminster Hall, in presence of members of both Houses, over which presided the new chancellor, Sir Nicholas Bacon, and his predecessor in office, the Archbishop of York.⁵ Four bishops who had sympathised with the late persecutions of the Protestants appeared on the Roman Catholic side. Opposed to them were Protestants just returned from banishment and eager for victory. The important work of re-establishing the Protestant religion was carried on in Parlia-

¹ Dr. Milman's 'St. Paul's,' p. 263.

² Lingard, vii. 262. 'The absence of the prelates,' says Lingard, 'threw an unusual gloom over the ceremony.'—Ib. p. 256.

³ Miss Aikin, i. 253. Warton's 'History of English Poetry,' iii. 302.

⁴ Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' i. 124. Mary had relieved Lord Robert from participation in his father's attainder.

⁵ Archbishop Heath, who had been Lord Keeper, resigned the seals, and was succeeded by Sir Nicholas Bacon, the father of the celebrated Lord Bacon.—Lingard, ii. 255.

ment. A slight alteration was made in the words of the Act of Supremacy to satisfy the queen's scruples with regard to her title therein as 'Head of the Church,' and the crown became once more supreme 'in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil.' An Act of Uniformity quickly followed, by which the bishops and clergy were required to disclaim obedience to the Pope before they took office in the Church of England. When the Spanish ambassador remonstrated against this, Elizabeth replied that she would not let her subjects' money be any longer carried away to the Pope.¹ Bishops who still persevered in opposition were summoned before the queen and threatened with deprivation. The Archbishop of York urged the queen to follow in the steps of her late sister, but Elizabeth declared that her sister had no power to bind the realm in future subjection to a usurped authority. In May, 1559, Bishop Bonner, after having taken his place in Parliament in January, was for the second time deposed; and so great was the popular animosity against him that his subsequent confinement in the Marshalsea prison, where he was treated with kindness, is said to have been needful to defend him from the rage of the London populace.² Although Cranmer's version of the Liturgy was approved, it was some time before it was generally adopted.

The Spanish ambassador wrote to Philip concerning the danger to which any prince of the Roman Catholic faith would be exposed in London, saying: 'The first mass which he attends will be the signal for a rising.' He steadfastly endeavoured to induce Philip to interfere in English politics more than suited that king's cautious policy, reminding him of the just claims of the Queen of Scots and of the disturbed state of Ireland, where the doctrines of Rome were still respected by the turbulent chiefs, with whom the ambassador was in correspondence, and who were anxious to be the subjects of the King of Spain. The ambassador saw danger that the King of France might attempt to place England under the Dauphiness and allure the Pope to excommunicate Elizabeth.

It was in the last month of 1557, nearly a year before Elizabeth's accession, that Mary Stuart, who had only just completed her fifteenth year, was married at Paris to the Dauphin, who was about the same age, but of a weakly constitution. The government of Scotland was in the hands of the queen-mother, Mary of Guise, who endeavoured, without

¹ Froude, i. 67.

² Dr. Milman's 'St. Paul's,' p. 264. Bonner died in that place after an imprisonment of nine years.

success, to stem the progress of the Reformation. The leading Protestants in Scotland formed an association, pledging themselves to defend their faith and its professors with their lives, and declaring their fixed hostility to the Church of Rome. Their league was known as 'The Congregation,' the principal members being styled 'The Lords of the Congregation.'

After Elizabeth's accession the Duke of Guise endeavoured, through the influence of his sister, the queen-mother, to discourage the Scottish Protestants by severe punishments. The burning of Walter Milne, a Protestant preacher, eighty years of age, still more excited the reformers to the destruction of crosses and images; in fact, civil war broke out, in which the queen-mother was assisted by French troops. But their aversion to such allies induced some of the Catholic nobles to join the Congregation. The chief leader of the Protestant league was Lord James Stuart, a convert to Protestantism, by title Prior of St. Andrew's, a son of the late King of Scotland, and consequently Mary's half-brother, a man distinguished alike by superior talents and intrepidity.¹

In July, 1559, a grand tournament was held at Paris to celebrate the marriage of Philip of Spain to the Princess Elizabeth of France. The arms of England were there ostentatiously displayed as Mary Stuart's. The King of France himself entered the lists as a combatant, where he received an accidental but fatal wound. The Dauphin upon this became king, as Francis II., and the new queen, Mary of Scotland, by her talent and energy, was already the favourite of a large party of ardent Catholics. Measures were quickly taken for the embarkation of French troops to be employed in Scotland against the reformers; and 'when Scotland is quieted,' so wrote the Spanish ambassador, 'will come England's turn.'² The young Queen of France wrote privately to the most distinguished of the Scottish nobles, urging them by every possible plea to return to their allegiance.

At this time the queen-mother, Mary of Guise, was besieged in the town of Leith by the Protestant confederates, who applied to the Queen of England for aid. Although Elizabeth had great reason to be displeased with the conduct of Mary, her habitual policy forbade her to encourage rebels, and she dreaded to awaken the hostility of either France or Spain. Cecil, however, induced her to aid the tottering cause of the Scottish Protestants by sending an English fleet and an army

¹ See Sir Walter Scott's 'History of Scotland,' ii. 57.

² Froude's 'History of Queen Elizabeth,' i. 124.

of 6,000 men. The attention of all Britain was fixed on the siege of Leith. For the first time the English and Scottish arms had united for a common cause, and the skill and courage shown by the French in their defence justified their reputation as the best troops in Europe. During the protracted siege the ex-regent, Mary of Guise, was conveyed for present safety to Edinburgh Castle, where she was slowly dying of a fatal malady. Shortly before her death she sent for Lord James Stuart, the Protestant son of her late husband James V., and for the Duke of Chatelherault, the head of the House of Hamilton, expressed to them her grief for the sufferings of Scotland, and strove to conciliate their opposition.¹

Thus, far from that brilliant French court of which she had once been the ornament, and far from the young queen her daughter, the widow of James V. closed on June 11 her nineteen years of exile in a foreign land.² Cecil, who had laboured strenuously on the side of the Congregation, arrived in Scotland to negotiate a peace, for which the French were well inclined. According to what was termed 'The Treaty of Leith,' which was arranged at Edinburgh, it was agreed that no foreign arms should in future be brought into the land without consent of the Scottish Parliament, that the high offices of State should be bestowed only on Scotsmen, and that Elizabeth's right to the English throne should not be called in question.

As soon as the French and English forces had withdrawn from Scotland, the Protestant party, who had a large majority in the Parliament, proceeded to substitute for the Roman Catholic a Protestant domination. The authority of the Pope was abjured for ever; the mass was abolished, and any persons who should take part in Catholic worship were declared punishable by death on the third conviction. So unanimous were the lower nobility, gentry, and burghers in enforcing these statutes, that no opposition was attempted by the Roman Catholic bishops who still held places in the Assembly. Eager to maintain the Protestant religion and to preserve their country from French influence, if only Scotland could be united to England under the ancient name of Great Britain, the heads of the Congregation were ready to sacrifice the national inde-

¹ The duke, whose title of Earl of Arran had lately devolved on his son, had been deemed presumptive heir to the Scottish throne, and was made Governor of Scotland in 1543. Henry VIII. had offered the hand of his daughter Elizabeth to the son of Arran, probably to prevent the marriage of that young nobleman to the infant princess, Mary Stuart.—Lingard, vi. 335-336.

² Froude, i. 137; Lingard, vii. 291.

pendence and give up Mary Stuart for ever. With this object they sent a deputation to offer to Elizabeth their willing homage if she would accept as a husband the young Earl of Arran, 'who, being in place next unto a king, shall bring with him the friendship and force of a kingdom.' If thus united with Scotland, and if Ireland were 'reformed,' the Queen of England would, so they asserted, 'become the strongest princess upon the seas.' Elizabeth had lately seen the Earl of Arran, when, after escaping from the honourable captivity in which he had been held for some months in France, he visited her court. He was two years younger than herself and failed to make a favourable impression, an opinion amply justified by his inferiority of intellect and his melancholy temperament, which ended in insanity. The Scottish leaders were much mortified at the failure of their hopes.

Francis II. and Mary refused to ratify the treaty of Leith, declaring that the Protestant majority in Parliament had acted as if constituting a republic independent of their sovereign, and they blamed Elizabeth for admitting the deputies into her presence.¹ Elizabeth's unfortunate partiality for Lord Robert Dudley had so far not declined. He was the son of that Duke of Northumberland who forfeited his life for his vain attempt to place the Lady Jane Grey on the throne. Lord Robert had little to recommend him except his handsome person; and the dislike with which the English nobility for the most part regarded him was increased by the rumour that his wife, after residing for some time in privacy in Berkshire, had suddenly perished by a fall downstairs, believed to have been purposely contrived in order to remove the obstacle to his ambition. Elizabeth's counsellors were henceforth convinced that marriage to a man of such character would be the greatest misfortune that could befall her.² The London preachers, sympathising with the Scottish Congregation, were eager for the queen's marriage to Arran.

Francis II., less than six months after his accession, was carried off by a short illness. Mary Stuart was again free, but powerless, at Paris. The Scottish noblemen, who immediately hastened to France to pay her their homage in her widowhood, were entrusted by her with three hundred letters

¹ Froude's 'Elizabeth,' i. 267-272.

² Lingard, vii. 295. This treaty of Leith was in after years a subject of continual dispute between the Queens of England and Scotland.

³ Froude, i. 279-287. Cecil wrote concerning Lord Robert that he was 'infamed by the death of his wife.' The fate of this lady inspired the genius of Sir Walter Scott, and is described, with some deviations from historic fact, in his well-known story of 'Kenilworth.'

addressed to the most influential persons in Scotland, promising that, should her subjects be ready to receive her, she would immediately return, and, trusting in their loyalty, would in future know no country but the Scotland of her fathers.¹

The generous sympathies of the Scottish people were immediately awakened in favour of their young widowed queen of eighteen. They no longer desired union with England. But when an emissary from Mary required that the Catholic ritual should be restored, Protestant animosity was rekindled. The Catholics sent the Bishop of Ross to France, offering to support Mary in the restoration of Catholicism with twenty thousand men; the Protestants, on the other hand, deputed her brother, Lord James Stuart, to invite her to rule according to the laws lately passed by the Scottish Parliament. Mary was naturally inclined to accept the offer of the Catholics; but prudence counselled her to welcome Lord James with kindness, and to leave the government for the present in his hands, stipulating only for herself on her return the exercise of her own ritual. Soon after the death of Francis, Elizabeth sent an autograph letter to Mary, warning her against contracting a marriage with a foreign prince, and desiring her to recognise the treaty of Leith. But Mary still refused to renounce her claim to the English crown so long as Elizabeth would not acknowledge her as the next in succession. To do that was obviously unsafe, as it would encourage all malcontents on the score of the present Protestant ascendancy to desire her immediate death. When Mary Stuart soon afterwards requested permission to travel through England on her way to Scotland, Elizabeth's counsellors advised a refusal, judging it perilous to allow the young queen to traverse three hundred miles of Elizabeth's dominions partly inhabited by zealous Catholics. Mary, who had anticipated a semi-regal progress through the North, was naturally indignant at the refusal of her request. 'I came here' (to France), she exclaimed to the English envoy, 'in defiance of Edward VI.; I will return to Scotland in defiance of his sister.' On August 15, the Queen of Scots embarked at Calais, expressing much emotion at leaving the gay and pleasant land which had so long been her home. The English fleet watched her course, but did not venture to interfere, and on the 19th she landed at Leith. Her subjects flocked to the beach to welcome her with acclamations, but their preparations had been made in haste, and the rudeness of Scottish manners is said to have been a painful contrast to the

¹ Froude, i. 321.

splendour to which Mary had been accustomed. She even wept on beholding the poor ill-accounted horses sent to carry her and her ladies to the palace of Holyrood. The musical taste of the people was equally inferior to that of Paris, and the two or three hundred violin-players who serenaded the queen at night prevented her needful repose. She tried to disguise her feelings, however, and received all these demonstrations of loyalty with her usual courtesy.

The most serious difficulty proved to be the difference of religion. The government of the polished France and the party which had lately gained supremacy in Scotland were alike in religious bigotry. At this period Protestants in France were suffering violent persecution; while in Scotland Catholicism had been put down by Parliament, and zealous Protestants could not readily forgive their queen for not renouncing the faith in which she had been educated. She was annoyed by pageants set up in ridicule of the Roman Catholic worship, and it was declared that vengeance similar to that inflicted on idolators in Judæa might be legally exacted from Catholic priests. Faithful to his promise to protect Mary in the exercise of her religious duties, Lord James Stuart stood on guard at the entrance of the queen's chapel during the first celebration of mass. But when Mary discovered that outrages might be caused by the publicity of these rites, she ordered the service to be privately conducted at Holyrood Palace, and forbade any interference with the Protestant usages. She made her brother, Lord James, one of her principal advisers, and the austere Puritans who came to Edinburgh prepared to offer defiance to Popery were in many cases softened by the grace of their queen. 'I think,' so a Campbell is said to have exclaimed, 'that there is some enchantment whereby men are bewitched.'¹ When the celebrated Scottish Reformer, John Knox, preached against the Catholic worship, Mary summoned him to her presence. Her enchanting manners had no effect on that stern preacher, but he afterwards declared that the queen possessed more craft than he had ever before perceived in so young a person. The common people in Scotland were too zealously attached to the Puritan faith to be won by Mary's attempts at conciliation, and the ministers reproached her in their sermons not only for what they considered the superstition of her observances, but also for her favourite amusements, hunting and dancing.

The position of the two queens under whose divided rule

¹ Froude, i. 366.

this island was placed was in some respects similar. For both marriage appeared desirable, and the subjects of both queens were divided by hostile creeds. Elizabeth, whose title to the crown had been disputed by Catholics, had, in the first instance, the greater reason to fear the influence of her rival; but her sovereignty over the more important kingdom, her age, exceeding that of Mary by ten years, and the firmness of the statesmen who surrounded her, were advantages which encouraged her to the proffer of well-intended, though fruitless, advice. Many plans were formed for the speedy marriage of the young Queen of Scotland.

Lady Lennox, daughter of the ex-queen, Margaret Tudor, by her marriage with the Earl of Angus, who was Elizabeth's cousin, eagerly promoted the suit of her son, Lord Darnley, although he was considerably younger than Mary. Mary earnestly requested to be allowed to confer with Elizabeth on English ground, asking for an escort of English noblemen to protect her from the border to the place of meeting. Elizabeth does not appear to have been averse to granting her request, but her Council were unanimous in their opposition. The princes of the House of Guise, near relations of the young queen, were in arms in France against the Protestants, and had denied Elizabeth's title to the throne of England. It was apparently impossible for Mary to look upon Elizabeth as a friend.¹

Hard pressed by their enemies, of whom the Duke of Guise was the head, the Protestants of France appealed to the Queen of England for assistance, and Elizabeth was induced to send them supplies of men and money, although more with the object of regaining possession of Calais, or of obtaining the port of Havre as an equivalent, than from any earnest zeal in their cause.

During the autumn of 1562, Elizabeth was taken ill of the small-pox, which greatly alarmed her ministers. A plot was discovered, in which two nephews of Cardinal Pole were said to be concerned, for immediately proclaiming Queen Mary in case of the queen's death. Should that event take place, the English statesmen knew not where to look for a successor to the crown. Lady Catherine Grey, who had the misfortune of relationship to the queen, having contracted a secret marriage with Lord Hertford, son of the late Protestant Protector, was undergoing penance for her transgression by a long confinement in the Tower.

¹ See the speech of Sir Nicholas Bacon before Elizabeth, delivered at Midsummer, 1561.—Froude, i. 411.

The discovery of the plot in which the Poles had been engaged occasioned an extension of the Act of Supremacy, with penalty of death to such as might obstinately refuse to submit to it. Many Protestants, even in this age of bigotry, objected to the severity of these enactments, and Elizabeth let the bishops know that she did not wish them to be put in force.¹ In fact, Elizabeth was more inclined towards the Roman Catholic worship than suited her Protestant subjects. She disliked the uncourtly freedom of Puritan manners, wished to uphold the use of the surplice, and to discourage the marriage of the higher clergy; was, moreover, even inclined to favour crucifixes and candles.² These feelings were evident when, in 1564, she paid a visit to the University of Cambridge, where she distinguished herself by fluency in speaking both Latin and Greek. To prevent dissatisfaction, Cecil preceded the queen to Cambridge, 'to put things in order,' and caused the Fellows to array themselves befittingly. The visit was over, and the queen had reached a place a few miles on the road, when she was followed by some students, who requested her to listen to a play prepared for her amusement, to which she consented. But on finding that the piece threw ridicule on the Catholic bishops, Elizabeth immediately withdrew from the room, uttering strong expressions of disapprobation.³

A considerable number of English Catholics, who looked forward to the union of the two kingdoms under Mary, and those Scottish nobles who adhered to the Catholic faith, regarded with favour the pretensions of the Earl of Darnley, a Catholic, by birth an Englishman, although a Scotsman by lineage, and nearly related to both queens. He was residing in England, when, in February, 1565, Mary sent a written request to Elizabeth that he might be allowed to visit Scotland, where business required his presence, and Elizabeth granted him leave of absence for three months.

Thus admitted to the Scottish court, Darnley was not slow to aspire, and although Mary in the first instance checked his presumption, Elizabeth's efforts to prevent their union further encouraged her to an alliance agreeable to many of her sup-

¹ This is admitted by Lingard (vii. 318).

² A work published by John Knox, called 'The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women,' which appeared before the accession of Elizabeth, is said to have increased her dislike to the Puritans.

³ Froude, ii. 91. Elizabeth visited Oxford about two years afterwards; and the visit was satisfactory, although some discussions of difficult political subjects took place in her presence—as, for example, the right of subjects to rebel against a bad sovereign.

porters. The English Council dreaded the increased strength which the projected marriage would give to the Catholic party; yet whether Elizabeth could be sincere when she proposed to her rival a union with Lord Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, has been greatly canvassed by historians. Mary expressed repugnance to that proposal; and when Elizabeth, repenting of her former compliance, desired that Lord Darnley and his father should immediately return to England, Mary met the request, as might be expected, with indignation. The Kings of Spain and France encouraged the Queen of Scots to marry a nobleman so nearly allied to the royal family of England. Mary summoned the chief nobility of Scotland to attend her at Stirling, and urgently requested Lord James Stuart, on whom she had lately conferred the title of Earl of Murray, to sign a paper recommending her to marry the Earl of Darnley. She tried in vain to obtain Murray's approbation, but thirteen nobles signed the paper, and Darnley was created Earl of Ross. On July 28, 1565, the queen's intention was proclaimed at Edinburgh; it was announced that her husband would receive the title of King, and the royal marriage was celebrated at a very early hour on the succeeding morning. This ill-omened union, so disastrous to both, was adorned by no gaiety or splendour, and spectators were struck with gloom when they beheld the black dress in which Mary was attired. She was in her twenty-third, her husband only in his twentieth, year.

An angry correspondence now ensued between the queens, and the bitter animosity of the Scottish parties revived. The Duke of Chatelherault, a Catholic, and formerly Regent of Scotland when Earl of Arran, now joined the party of Murray. The prospect was stormy, each party accusing the other of treacherous conspiracy. The friends of the Congregation were desired to meet at Ayr on August 24, when Mary summoned her vassals, and set off from Edinburgh on the 25th on horseback, pistols at her saddle-bow, her husband riding by her side in gilt armour. Her opponents were unable to show an equal force, and from their frequent changes of place to avoid the queen's pursuit, the expedition was called in Scotland 'The Roundabout Raid.' The Protestant leaders were compelled to disband their forces, and retired into England; but when the Earl of Murray ventured to London, he was received with much coldness by Elizabeth, who disliked to be implicated in the plots of rebels.

Mary returned to Edinburgh in triumph, hoping that her

days of humiliation had passed away, that she might venture to uphold the Roman Catholic ascendancy, and extort from Elizabeth recognition of herself as the next in succession to the English crown. She applied for the advice of the Pope and the King of Spain. Philip counselled caution; a false move might prove her ruin. If she should grasp at the English crown too suddenly, she would, too probably, lose it for ever.

Very soon Mary became disgusted with the weak arrogance of the youth whom she had allowed to share her throne, and whom the nobility despised. It was his earnest wish to obtain the crown matrimonial, which it rested with the Parliament to confer; and when disappointed, he became the violent enemy of the queen's favourite, David Rizzio, a Piedmontese musician, who had arrived in Scotland in the train of the ambassador of Savoy, and whom Mary had raised to the post of her private secretary. That the queen should value his talents was natural; but Rizzio was disliked by the Scottish nobles as a foreigner, and by the Protestants on account of his Catholic faith.

Darnley determined to rid himself of Rizzio, and it is said that he even wished him murdered in the queen's presence.

He easily found willing accomplices. On the evening of March 9, Mary was supping in her private apartment at Holyrood with Rizzio, when Darnley abruptly entered, followed by some armed men, and while the queen uttered unavailing cries, Rizzio was dragged to the adjoining room and stabbed to death. On being informed of this catastrophe, Mary is reported to have said, 'I will then dry my tears and study revenge.'¹ Intimidated by consciousness of his atrocious crime, Darnley hoped to obtain pardon by betraying his associates. But he had incurred the hatred of one whose spirit was as vindictive as his own, and who was far more skilful in masking her designs. Mary allowed her wretched husband to accompany her flight from Edinburgh, and dissembled for a time her implacable hatred. On June 19 she gave birth to a son, heir-apparent to the crown of Scotland, and heir-presumptive by descent to that of England, although not so recognised by Elizabeth or by Parliament. Nearly twenty-four years had passed since, at a disastrous period for Scotland, Mary Stuart entered the world, as her father left it. Her son's father was now seeking to leave the land where his deed had tarnished his name and imperilled his safety.

Elizabeth controlled her jealous feelings so far as to send polite messages to the Queen of Scots, and directed her ambas-

¹ Scott's 'History of Scotland,' ii. 105.

sador to present a golden font for the christening. Mary, in return for this civility, named Elizabeth her son's godmother, the Countess of Argyle standing proxy.

Mary now chiefly relied on the Earl of Bothwell, the high admiral, a Roman Catholic nobleman, who had been a steady adherent of her mother, and was one of the first of the Scottish nobility who flocked to Paris on the death of Francis II. He was a bold and impetuous man, and at deadly variance with the Earl of Murray. Darnley had retired to his father's residence at Glasgow, and fell ill of small-pox. Mary travelled thither to see him when he was recovering, spoke kindly to him, and ordered a litter to be prepared to convey him to Edinburgh. Won by her seeming kindness, and probably softened by illness, Darnley entreated permission to resume his former place at court, which she is said to have promised him. The danger of spreading infection furnished a pretext for not carrying him at once to the palace, and he was taken to a lonely house outside the walls of Edinburgh, close to a ruined church called the Kirk of Field. In that place Mary spent some days with her husband. A room beneath his apartment had been prepared for her, in which she passed two nights. In that room a pile of gunpowder was afterwards placed. On the night of Monday, February 9, Mary, after passing the evening with her husband, departed to a ball at the palace. That night became the most memorable in the annals of Scotland. At two o'clock the citizens of Edinburgh were alarmed by a loud explosion. Darnley's abode had become a heap of ruins, his body and that of his page were found at a short distance. Two of Bothwell's retainers had fired the train and escaped, while Bothwell himself waited in the garden to witness the catastrophe. Thus perished the second husband of Queen Mary, and at the same time all chance of obtaining the English crown. The world divined the author of the murder, and placards were soon afterwards posted on the walls accusing Bothwell of the crime, and the queen herself of participation.¹

To save appearances, the queen's chamber was, according to custom, hung with black, and she remained for some days in strict seclusion. Letters were written to the foreign courts, and rewards were offered for the apprehension of the murderers. The Spanish ambassador in England, naturally inclined to favour Mary, pressed his friend the envoy from Savoy, who was then at Edinburgh, to give him hope of the queen's innocence, but

¹ Froude, ii. 371.

Maret said nothing in her favour. 'The spirits of the Catholics are broken,' wrote De Silva to the King of Spain; 'should it turn out that she is guilty, her party in England is gone, and by her means there is no more chance of a restoration of the Catholic religion.'

Soon after the birth of the infant Prince of Scotland, a book appeared at Paris, by a Scottish refugee, declaring that infant the heir of the English throne.¹ The two Houses of Parliament agreed to a conference upon this anxious subject, and committees sat daily for a fortnight to prepare an address to Elizabeth. She resented their interference. By pointing out a living successor, disaffection might be encouraged towards her person, and she disliked to be advised concerning her marriage. But the House of Commons persisted that they had a right to bring forward any subject of importance. Mary's first foreign letter after her husband's murder was addressed to the Archbishop of Glasgow, ambassador at Paris, expressing her determination to bring to justice the perpetrators of the crime, and professing to believe that she had nearly shared the same fate. In reply, the archbishop conveyed to the queen, although in careful language, the terrible prevailing suspicion that 'all had been done by her order,' urging that 'if vengeance were not taken, it were better that she had lost life and all.'² She also wrote to the Earl of Lennox, Darnley's father, who required her immediately to assemble the whole Scottish nobility to investigate the cause of 'so dreadful a catastrophe.' When Mary stated in reply that she had already directed Parliament to meet in the spring, and that she thought it unnecessary to anticipate their assembling, Lennox expressed much dissatisfaction, as also his fears that the perpetrators would escape punishment. The news of the murder was received with much emotion by Elizabeth. Although she had tried to prevent the marriage, Darnley was her cousin, and she felt all the necessity of an immediate inquiry. She assured the Spanish ambassador that she did not believe in Mary's implication in the murder; nevertheless she urged her in an earnest letter to execute justice, and so to act that she might appear to the world as 'a noble princess and a loyal wife.' Reports, however, were already in circulation that Bothwell was to be the queen's next husband. It was impossible

¹ Mr. Dalton, in the House of Commons, bitterly inveighed against this publication, an interference which Elizabeth so far resented as to require his temporary imprisonment. She objected to all discussion concerning the succession.—Froude, chap. xlv.

² Froude, iii. 6, 12, 17.

to clear Bothwell from these accusations without at least the appearance of a public trial, and the Earl of Lennox was invited to appear at the Tolbooth of Edinburgh on April 12, to bring evidence against him as principal accuser. Lennox desired the protection of a troop of his friends, but Mary, on the plea of guarding against a dangerous collision, forbade him to bring more than six of his retainers into court. The earl, consequently, dared not expose himself to the superior force of the accused. He petitioned for the postponement of the trial, and requested Elizabeth to remonstrate to that effect, which she immediately did; but the letter brought to Holyrood by the English messenger was detained by Bothwell, who proceeded to the court attended by 200 soldiers and 4,000 gentlemen.

After one of the servants of Lord Lennox had pleaded in vain for postponement, evidence was brought in disproof of the presence of Bothwell at the time of the explosion, and half the jury returned a verdict of acquittal. 'There was no prosecution, no case, no witnesses.' The pretended trial having thus ended, Bothwell posted a paper offering to engage in single combat with any gentleman of reputation who might dare to charge him with the murder.¹ The Spanish ambassador informed Philip that Bothwell had been acquitted by the order of the Queen of Scots, Lennox not being present, and the court being surrounded by Bothwell's armed retainers. Lennox fled to England; Mary chose to represent that Bothwell was cleared from all suspicion, and the Parliament which met immediately afterwards confirmed his 'purgation.'

To ratify his acquittal, Bothwell enticed the primate and other prelates, besides several earls and persons of distinction, to meet him at a tavern, where, after partaking freely of wine, he laid before them a bond declaring that those present would maintain his cause against all accusers, and, moreover, that, considering the queen's solitary condition, they would approve of her accepting the Earl of Bothwell as her husband, should she be moved to do so, 'by respect of his faithful services.' One or two noble persons slipped away, or evaded signing this engagement, but the greater number affixed their signatures to the bond. From the name of the tavern at which this meeting took place, it has been known as 'Ainslie's Supper,' and has been deemed the most disgraceful act of a wicked time. Yet it was 'less mischievous,' says Mr. Froude, 'than the pretended trial.'² Already Bothwell had carried the sceptre before the queen, and had received from Parliament confirmation of all his honours.

¹ Froude, iii. 49. Lingard, vii. 367.

² Froude, iii. 53.

On April 22, the queen went to Stirling, nominally to visit her child, who was under the care of the Earl of Mar.

On her return she was met by Bothwell and a troop of his followers, who, apparently by violence, carried her off to Dunbar Castle. Upon this an assembly of the Scottish nobles sent to inquire whether the queen had approved of her seizure; declaring that, if an unwilling captive, they were ready to avenge her. Indeed, the whole people were indignant to see Bothwell grasping the reins of power. But on May 3, Mary again appeared at Edinburgh, accompanied by Bothwell, and the banns of marriage were published. The queen set forth to the world that, although she had not been pleased with his forcible seizure of her person, she had so high a sense of the virtues and past services of the Earl of Bothwell as to enter upon marriage with him. The golden font presented by Queen Elizabeth for her son's baptism was melted into coin to add to the finances. Bothwell was made Duke of Orkney, and Mary placed the coronet on his head with her own hands.

It was on May 15, at dawn of day, that Mary was united to her third husband. Not a single nobleman was present, and she was again married in a mourning dress, this time by the Bishop of Orkney, in the Calvinistic form.

Bothwell vainly imagined that by this concession he should obtain the goodwill of the powerful Protestant faction. The union was rendered still more scandalous by the divorce from his wife which Bothwell had very lately procured that he might gain the object of his ambition.¹

The Scottish lords had previously threatened that, if Mary married Bothwell, they would crown the infant prince, and Catholics and Protestants joined heartily together in animosity towards the man whom the queen had thus placed over them.

On June 11, Mary escaped in disguise from Edinburgh to the castle of Dunbar. Shortly afterwards, supported by their personal followers, the queen and her husband confronted the hostile confederates at Carberry Hill, but no battle ensued. A single combat with one of his accusers was proposed by Bothwell; it was accepted, but prevented by the fears of the queen. Becoming aware of the insuperable enmity with which he was regarded by all ranks, and fearing for his life, Mary, to save him, consented to separate under promise of protection. The lords conducted the queen to Edinburgh, but

¹ Froude, iii. 74.

the people insulted her and clamoured for her death.¹ A note of affection written by Mary to her husband fell into their hands, and they distrusted her intentions with regard to him. Scarcely able to screen her from the fury of the people, they determined to immure her for the present in Loch Leven Castle, on an island in the lake, under the care of Sir William Douglas, half-brother of the Earl of Murray.

Mary's removal to Loch Leven took place by night on June 17, unsuspected by the mob of Edinburgh. The lords immediately prepared a justification of their conduct, accusing the queen not of Darnley's murder, but of infatuated passion for Bothwell, and of interference with the proceedings in his late trial, adding, moreover, their apprehensions for the safety of the infant prince.

The news of Mary's imprisonment drew forth indignant remonstrances from Elizabeth, who thought that no errors of conduct could justify subjects in inflicting punishment on their sovereign.

Looking on herself as the feudal superior as well as the older and more powerful queen, Elizabeth conceived that she was a fitting arbiter, and wished that Mary should be immediately restored to liberty. Elizabeth wrote to her, blaming her conduct in marrying a man said to be implicated in the murder of her former husband, urging that the perpetrators of that atrocious act should be punished, and the utmost care taken of her son, but still expressing her wish to be Mary's 'good neighbour, dear sister, and faithful friend.' A verbal message from Elizabeth to Mary, to the effect that at all times she might count upon a sure friend in the Queen of England, is said to have given the captive queen much present comfort, but was in after years the source of great trouble to Elizabeth.

During Mary's imprisonment at Loch Leven, very important evidence concerning her participation in Darnley's murder was brought to light.

It is said that she had given Bothwell a silver casket, in which he placed her letters and love sonnets with some papers of importance, and that on leaving Edinburgh he entrusted this casket to Sir James Balfour, who afterwards surrendered it to the hostile leaders. The Earl of Murray, then at Paris, was summoned to return. Much delicacy was requisite respecting the contents of these papers, several noblemen having

¹ Lingard, viii. 34. There is some mystery about these transactions. Mary 'expected,' says Lingard, 'to proceed to the palace, but was conducted to the house of the provost.'

approved of Darnley's murder. Two measures only were now proposed—the queen's deposition or her trial. Excepting among those admitted to a sight of the evidence, 'men affirmed her guilt or denied it, according to the complexion of their creed.' The Council required Mary to sign a paper—her own abdication—appointing the Earl of Murray to the regency, and another, agreeing to the coronation of her infant son. Feeling herself under compulsion, she complied. On July 29, the infant prince was crowned as James VI. In the following December the Scottish Parliament legalised these acts, stating that, according to the evidence of the queen's private letters to Bothwell, it appeared certain that she had been aware of the intended murder, and justly deserved punishment.

Bothwell meantime was leading the wild life of a pirate chieftain in the Orkneys. Fearful of apprehension, he took refuge in Denmark, where, some years later, he died in prison. During ten weary months Mary remained a close prisoner at Loch Leven; but she had still some friends in Scotland, and she contrived to fascinate some members of the family under whose custody she was placed. On the evening of May 2 she crossed the lake in disguise, was joined on the shore by friends and retainers, and, after being many hours on horseback, spent her time of rest in writing to her uncle at Paris, the Cardinal of Lorraine. Unusually hardy, and unflinching in courage, she 'was ready to expose herself to all perils in hope of victory.' Catholics to whom the Regent Murray had refused favour, and Royalists, who still clung to their hereditary sovereign in spite of all accusations, flocked to join her at Hamilton, and five days after her escape she had the proffered services of 6,000 men.¹ But these forces were soon outnumbered by those who obeyed the call of Murray. On May 13, the Queen of Scots beheld, from the hill of Langside,² the last combat in which her partisans engaged, and their complete defeat.

Fearful of immediate capture, she fled with the utmost swiftness to the border, and reached Dundrennan Abbey⁴ on the third day after the battle. A sudden impulse apparently induced her to throw herself on Elizabeth's protection, and after writing a letter to the queen, in which she explained her expulsion from Scotland, and declared that she threw herself upon

¹ Froude, iii. 170. There is reason to believe, says this writer, that the bond signed at Craigmiller, before Darnley's murder, had been in this casket, but was destroyed. The confederates desired to keep those writings only which affected the guilt of the queen and Bothwell.

² Froude, iii. 214.

³ Near Glasgow.

⁴ Near Kirkcudbright.

her sister's hospitality, she embarked in an open fishing-boat on Sunday, May 16, without even a change of clothes, and landed that evening at Workington.

The news of Mary's arrival spread rapidly through the northern counties among a people chiefly Catholic, who looked on her as the heir to the crown, and even regarded her as having a claim to its immediate possession superior to the title of Elizabeth. Lord Lowther lost no time in arriving to escort her to the castle of Carlisle, where Mary for a few days held a little court, and welcomed all who paid her their respects. Meantime both Elizabeth and her Council were in perplexity. It was Elizabeth's inclination to comply with Mary's request and receive her at court as a royal guest; but Cecil refused his sanction, in consideration of the grave imputations attached to her. If Mary were innocent, she ought to be reinstated in authority; but to him her innocence was incredible, and he ordered measures to be taken to prevent her escape. 'If Mary left England,' said the English Council, 'she would throw herself upon France, and the Queen of England would never be secure from evil practices.' This was good reasoning, but no justification of the honour of the queen whose promises had tempted Mary over the border. It was judged safer to bring her further into England, and on July 13 she was removed to Bolton Castle, in Yorkshire. Mary continued to urge that, if admitted to Elizabeth's presence, she should be able to vindicate her character, but this was required of her as the necessary preliminary to an interview.

At first her behaviour was conciliatory; she consented to abandon her claim to the English crown during Elizabeth's life, to desist from alliance with France, to cease to maintain the Catholic religion in Scotland should she be re-established on that throne, and even to allow the prosecution of Bothwell. She was, of course, far from sincere in these promises; in fact, she assured a deputation of Roman Catholics at Bolton that she continued earnest in their cause.¹

Relying on Elizabeth's promise that the projected inquiry should not be suffered to prejudice her honour, Mary reluctantly consented to allow an investigation of the past events to be held at York, in the beginning of October, before the Earl of Sussex, the Duke of Norfolk, and Sir Ralph Sadler, the commissioners of the English government. There were three parties to be represented:² the Queen of Scots herself, those Scottish confederates who had driven her from her kingdom,

¹ Froude, iii. 266-271.

² *Ib.*, chap. 1.

and the Regent Murray, who came to vindicate his conduct and to prevent Mary's return to the throne. Provided she would confirm her abdication, and relinquish her charges against the confederates, Murray offered to destroy the fatal evidence of the casket, and even gave hope of her eventual restoration. But Mary could not abandon her hopes of a speedy triumph. During this inquiry, her imprisonment was extremely lenient. She hunted in the adjacent country, 'even in the wildest weather,' and fears were felt by the English councillors lest a party of horsemen might cross the moors and effect her rescue.

In November the conference was transferred to Westminster; and five peers, among whom were Lord Bacon and the Earl of Leicester, were added to the number of judges. Before these noblemen Murray at length displayed the contents of the casket. The evidence against the Queen of Scots was placed in the hands of the Council, and, after minute comparison of the writing with other letters of Mary's, Cecil, Bacon, Leicester, and Sadler declared themselves convinced of her guilt.¹ Elizabeth desired Mary to reply to these charges, either in writing, by counsel, or before a committee of noblemen at Bolton; but Mary refused to plead, persisting in her demand for an audience of the queen. Elizabeth allowed Murray to depart for Scotland, the bearer of encouraging assurances to his friends and of a loan of three thousand pounds for the support of his party; but she added her opinion that no evidence conclusively condemnatory had yet been brought forward. She prohibited the publication of the casket-papers, and wished that Mary's reputation should not be too seriously damaged before the world to admit of her restoration. It was a source of continual trouble to Elizabeth that her alliance and protection were sought by the Protestant subjects of Catholic sovereigns when driven into rebellion by oppression. Always averse to aiding rebels, she had no personal aversion to the Roman Catholic ritual, which she preferred to the Puritanism of Scotland and Geneva. But the Catholic sovereigns of Europe questioned her title to the throne, and her ministers, more Protestant than herself, pressed upon her attention the claims of the Scots in revolt against Mary, of the persecuted Protestants of France, and of the oppressed inhabitants of the Netherlands, for countenance and aid.

¹ Arguments are brought against the authenticity of these celebrated letters in the 'Quarterly Review' of April, 1870, in the article on Froude's History; but the reviewer is far from expressing any belief in Queen Mary's innocence.

The Netherlands had enjoyed for many years unexampled commercial prosperity, with some degree of religious toleration, under the rule of the Duchess of Parma. English commerce enriched the cities, and when either Mary Tudor or Elizabeth required a loan it was negotiated at Antwerp. From Antwerp Elizabeth obtained her Turkish horse, her silk stockings and velvets, also gunpowder and materials of war. But in 1566 Protestant fanatics disturbed the peace of these prosperous cities, and certain fine paintings in the churches suffered from the zeal against images.

These excesses were cruelly revenged. In August, 1567, the Duke of Alva entered the Netherlands at the head of a Spanish army, and the land hitherto so prosperous became one vast battle-field. The principal English agent at Antwerp was Sir Thomas Gresham, who had been knighted by Elizabeth, well known as the royal merchant.¹ The terrified Protestant traders, apprehending their ruin, applied to Gresham, inquiring whether they could transfer their peaceful industry to England; and, with Cecil's encouragement, many passed over to this country, whilst others, sheltered behind the dykes and canals of Holland, and partially assisted by Elizabeth, ultimately succeeded in establishing their freedom.

But while the English nation shuddered at the atrocities committed in the Netherlands by the Duke of Alva, in Ireland the disturbances raised by the disorderly inhabitants were repressed with a severity which excited outbreaks still more formidable. The Protestant religion had been imposed in Ireland upon a nation of Roman Catholics, and numerous churches were destroyed, the ruins of which still bear witness to the pious usages of the Irish people. The mass was everywhere prohibited by the governing party, and it was by stealth, in the castles of rebel chiefs, or at stations in the glens among the mountains, that the priests ventured to administer religious rites to men who were fast losing this single restraint upon their passions.² English adventurers were encouraged to settle on confiscated lands, where, frequently yielding to the evil influence of their surroundings, they became worse than the native Irish; while the native inhabitants, under a continual dread that their lands would be taken from them by the sword,

¹ Sir Thomas Gresham was for a time the English Minister at the court of the Duchess of Parma, Regent of the Netherlands. At the same time he carried on business in Lombard Street, London, as a merchant and banker. See 'Life of Gresham,' published in 1846.

² Froude's 'Elizabeth,' iv. 534.

frequently broke out into rebellion.¹ The towns which might otherwise have been loyal to English rule, looked eagerly to any foreign power ready to vindicate their proscribed religion, and no city but Dublin would admit an English garrison within its walls. The task of governing a people of lawless habits, different creed, and far inferior civilisation, has proved a hard test of justice even down to our own time. The viceroy was at this time the accomplished Sir Henry Sidney, who among his peers would have shone as a statesman; but up to the time of his recall, by his own desire, in 1571, although the rebellion had been subdued by severity, peace still remained insecure. Walter Devereux, Earl of Essex, having formed a plan for the improvement of a yet unexplored district of Ulster, between the city of Belfast and the sea, obtained from Elizabeth authority to build castles, make laws, and plant towns, with which he landed in August, 1573, accompanied by friendly volunteers. But the hopes which Lord Essex had formed of a happy settlement vanished after a few weeks. His herds were stolen, his followers deserted, and he complained of the character of many of the settlers sent to join him. To administer good government in that disordered country required a larger outlay of money than the English exchequer could afford. With a large body of police regularly paid and disciplined, with impartial justice and the abandonment of confiscation, an intelligent viceroy might have succeeded in tranquillising Ireland; but 'the crown did not pay the officers, the officers did not pay the men, the men did not pay the farmers—all was poverty, confusion, and discontent.'²

Elizabeth and her ministers were under continual apprehension that if English aid were liberally given to the Protestants in the Netherlands, Philip would retaliate by encouraging disaffection in Ireland. Meantime, English privateers domineered unchecked in the English Channel, and seized Spanish treasure-ships sailing to Antwerp. The Duke of Alba ordered the arrest of English residents abroad, and sequestered English ships; there was all but open war between England and Spain.

The report of intrigues, in which some of the English nobility were engaged, occasioned Mary to be removed, early in 1569, to the castle of Tutbury, in Staffordshire, under the care

¹ The Earl of Ormond wrote from Ireland to Cecil in serious remonstrance concerning the provocation thus given to the people, who feared lest they should be despoiled of their lands.—Froude, iv. 505.

² Froude, iv. 531-536.

of the Earl of Shrewsbury, who was desired to treat her with the honour due to her royal birth, but carefully to prevent her escape. Complaints having been made of the closeness of her confinement, she was afterwards removed to a pleasant country-house belonging to the earl at Wingfield. Elizabeth appears to have been desirous of making terms for Mary's liberation. The Regent of Scotland convoked the nobility and deputies from the Scottish towns, who declared that, although ready to allow her return as a private person, they should consider her restoration to the throne dangerous to the peace of the whole island.¹ Unfortunately for Mary, schemes were again afloat for her marriage, and the Duke of Norfolk, who was fixed upon by her English friends, was approved as her intended husband by the Spanish ambassador. In the autumn, under Elizabeth's alarm at approaching rebellion, the Queen of Scots was again immured in Tutbury Castle.

Percy Earl of Northumberland, and Neville Earl of Westmoreland, a descendant of the proud family of Warwick the king-maker, had caballed with the Duke of Norfolk, hoping to rescue Mary, to obtain aid from the Duke of Alva, and to overawe the English government. On October 8 the duke was arrested and taken to the Tower. It had been expected that he would be supported by the men of the eastern counties; but he contrived to send a messenger, earnestly desiring his friends not to rise, as his doom would then be certain.

The English Council gave orders that the Act of Uniformity should be enforced. All magistrates were required to prove their loyalty by their attendance at church; but these measures provoked the Catholics of the northern counties beyond all restraint. It was in vain that the Queen of Scots and the Spanish ambassador tried to quiet them.

On November 15, 1569, the Earl of Northumberland and the Nevilles entered the city of Durham, destroyed the English Bible and Prayer-book in the cathedral, and celebrated mass; after which act of defiance they sent a herald to proclaim at every village-green or town-hall of the district that they intended to restore the old worship, but without injury to the rights of Queen Elizabeth. Their first intention had been to free Mary from confinement, and the Duke of Alva was prepared to assist by invading England so soon as the conspirators had succeeded in that purpose. But the general tranquillity remained undisturbed. On the 26th, eleven days after the

¹ Froude, iii. 462.

celebration of mass at Durham, the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland were proclaimed traitors at Windsor. Northumberland was a Knight of the Garter. The heralds threw down his banner and arms from their place in St. George's chapel, and spurned from the gates the insignia of the knighthood which he had disgraced. At the disastrous close of the rebellion, the earls escaped to Scotland, but were there exposed to the fury of their adversaries. Northumberland was taken prisoner by the Earl of Murray, and sent to Loch Leven Castle, the former prison of Mary. Vengeance fell heavily on the northern counties of England, whose inhabitants had followed the standards of the earls. So numerous were the executions that at length the crown prosecutor counselled lenity, lest the district should be depopulated. The Catholic party in Scotland abhorred the government of Murray, although his probity and talents had commanded general respect. The arrest of Northumberland inflamed that aversion, and the party which had long desired his overthrow now formed a deliberate plan for his assassination, and James Hamilton, of Bothwellhaugh, nephew of the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, was their appointed instrument. Murray had been already the object of frequent conspiracies, and was accustomed to danger. He received the fatal shot as he rode through Linlithgow, Hamilton having taken steady aim from an ambush.

The liberal party was in consternation at the death of Murray; Elizabeth, although she had not been cordial to him, acknowledged that she had lost her truest friend. Mary did not disguise her satisfaction, and is said to have settled a pension on the perpetrator of a murder which only aggravated her ill-repute and increased the misery of Scotland.¹ Wishing to regain her popularity, which the late severity had diminished, Elizabeth, with Cecil's aid, drew up an address to her subjects, explaining the principles of her past government. A printed copy was sent to every parish in England, to be conspicuously posted, and to be read aloud from the pulpit.

The failure of the late insurrection did not discourage the Catholic party from renewing connexion with the French and Spanish ambassadors, with whose assistance they hoped to liberate the Duke of Norfolk, and to bring about his marriage with the Queen of Scots.

The Pope had prepared a bull against Elizabeth, of which her subjects were long in ignorance, no one daring to produce it in England. It declared the queen an alien from the whole

¹ Froude, p. 585.

Christian community, released her subjects from their allegiance, and even forbade them to continue to obey her. Such a manifesto would have justified the earls in their revolt, and would have cleared it, to Catholic judgment at least, from the hateful imputation of treason. But Philip disapproved of the promulgation of the bull, and, although willing to see Queen Mary restored, was averse to cancel his alliance with Elizabeth. An English Catholic, named Felton, at length dared to expose the hostile instrument, and on the morning of May 15, 1570, the bull was discovered affixed to the door of the Bishop of London's city residence. Whatever the Catholic Powers of Europe might wish, the head of the Catholic Church had thus declared war against the Queen of England. But 'the time was gone by,' says the Catholic historian, 'when the thunders of the Vatican could shake the thrones of princes.' The experiment had signally failed when tried in 1539 against King Henry VIII.¹

But although Pius vainly attempted the allegiance of Elizabeth's subjects, and her life was even the more ardently cherished by her Protestant people, the document denouncing her as a usurper, and solemnly conferring her kingdom upon Philip, did not remain a dead letter; it was fraught with terrible consequences to the Roman Catholic party.² It was the signal for the arrival in England of a swarm of zealous priests: men privately of strict morals, but some of whom belonged to a brotherhood which held it lawful to take the life of sovereigns who were under the Pope's excommunication.

When the head of the Church was exciting the faithful to the perpetration of crime, religious bigotry was defensible. Cecil's system of spies, even the cruelties inflicted on Felton and others, were justifiable in the eyes of the public. After the death of Murray, Scotland continued to be distracted by the hostile factions of 'King's-men,' as the supporters of the infant James were called, and 'Queen's-men,' who still held the preponderance among the nobility. The Scottish lords refused to surrender to Elizabeth the insurgents who had taken refuge in Scotland, and the border counties were consequently desolated with that cruelty which commonly attended Scottish wars.

¹ Lingard, viii. 57. Froude, iv. 59-82.

² Felton was a gentleman of property and education, most ardent in his zeal for the Roman Catholic religion. He acknowledged at once that he had set up the bull, but refused, when under torture, to reveal the names of his accomplices. He refused to the last to acknowledge Elizabeth's title; but sent her as a gift a diamond ring of great value, as a token that he had no personal ill-will towards her.—Lingard, viii. 57.

The strong-minded men of the General Assembly met at Edinburgh in July to declare that, 'whatever England might say, Mary Stuart should be no queen of theirs.' No blandishments nor foreign intrigues could reconcile the Scottish Kirk to Mary.

The Duke of Norfolk had been, in August, 1570, released from the Tower and placed under more gentle restraint; but in an evil hour he became involved in a plot against Elizabeth in which the Pope's agent, Rudolphi, a banker of Brussels, contrived to implicate a great part of the English nobility. The duke was the principal peer of England, and had much influence in the eastern counties. He had for some time hesitated to take steps which would really expose him to the charge of treason; but, encouraged by a list of forty noblemen said to be on the point of rising against Elizabeth and inviting the King of Spain and the Pope to send troops to land at Harwich, he promised his assistance, declaring his chief objects to be the support of the Queen of Scots and the restoration of the Catholic faith. Elizabeth's reluctance to appoint an heir to the throne, and her refusal of all overtures of marriage, had disposed some even of her Protestant subjects to look with favour on Mary's projected marriage to the Duke of Norfolk, who had been supposed to be inclined to the Protestant faith. The full depth of Norfolk's treason and dissimulation have been only lately revealed to the world.¹

At this time of intrigue and conspiracy, the Queen-mother of France earnestly promoted the union of Elizabeth with her son, the Duke of Anjou, and the English ministers were so desirous for the queen's marriage as even to encourage this scheme. But, after long suspense and apparent irresolution, Elizabeth decided against it. The prince was, indeed, seventeen years younger than herself, and a bigoted adherent of the Catholic faith, to whom the rites of his religion must have been allowed. The treasonable designs in which the Duke of Norfolk had engaged with the Queen of Scots were exposed by the ingenuity of Cecil, lately created Lord Burleigh, who did not scruple to have torture applied to obtain evidence from unwilling witnesses. A bag of money, which also contained letters, was brought to the Council, and it was thus sufficiently clear that Norfolk was promoting Mary's cause in Scotland. In spite of all the scandal attached to her character, her influence was great among the English nobility, who looked upon her as the legal successor of the royal house.

¹ Frode, iv. 167-169. Milman's 'St. Paul's,' p. 306.

There were only sixty-two members of the House of Lords, besides Northumberland, the prisoner at Loch Leven, Westmoreland and Morley, who had both escaped to Flanders, and others who were incapacitated from taking their places; and Rudolphi boasted that forty peers favoured his enterprise in their hearts, although the greater part feared openly to advocate it. In September, 1571, the duke was again committed to the Tower. The agent of Mary, the Bishop of Ross, had disclosed her participation in the conspiracy, and her imprisonment at Sheffield became more rigorous.

The trial of the Duke of Norfolk was held at Westminster Hall on January 16, before the Earl of Shrewsbury, the president of a court of twenty-six peers. Ten members of that court, among whom was the Earl of Shrewsbury himself, although they had been on Rudolphi's list, were now compelled by strong evidence to agree in a verdict of 'guilty,' which the Lords severally pronounced at eight o'clock that evening by the fitful gleam of the pine-torches amidst the darkness of the hall.¹

The duke prayed the peers to intercede with the queen in favour of his six children, and for the payment of his debts. Elizabeth felt the task before her extremely painful. Her ministers urged the fulfilment of the verdict, and the general feeling of the country was decidedly against Norfolk.

But he was the chief of the nobility, her own second cousin on her mother's side, and had been her representative at the court of France.

She acknowledged that he deserved to die, but recalled the first warrant which she signed. Again convinced that his doom was necessary, she signed another, and, unable to sleep, recalled it at two in the morning by a note in her own hand to Lord Burleigh. It was not till after that minister had summoned Parliament to strengthen her wavering resolution, and both Houses had joined in a petition against further suspense, that at length, with the deepest reluctance, Elizabeth gave the fatal order, and the execution took place on Tower Hill on June 2, five months after the duke's condemnation. After this exposure of treasonable correspondence with the King of Spain, Elizabeth withdrew her objection to the publication of the casket papers, and a full account of 'The Doings of Mary Queen of Scots' was printed and circulated at the European courts. Strengthened by the general indignation, the House of Commons resolved to pass an Act of Attainder against the Scottish queen, and a deputation from both Houses urged Elizabeth no longer to extend her pro-

¹ Froude, p. 327.

tection to Mary. Elizabeth thanked them for their care of her safety, but would not allow an Act to pass depriving Mary of the succession.¹ Further executions took place in Scotland, where Mary's followers dwindled away to a small band. The Earl of Northumberland, who had been long confined at Loch Leven was given up to the English government for a bag of gold. Lord Hunsdon, Elizabeth's cousin, attempted in vain to intercede for the life of Northumberland, and he was executed at York on August 22. Although the treaty of marriage between Elizabeth and the Duke of Anjou had been set aside, the Queen-mother of France desired the French ambassador to promote the suit of her *younger* son, the Duke of Alençon, who would, as she declared, 'be easy' in respect of the differences of religion. Elizabeth's inclination appears to have been contrary to marriage, but, wishing to secure a league with France, she avoided for several months returning a decided answer to the proposal. State policy alone could even suggest so unnatural an alliance. Catherine, Queen-dowager of France, hated Protestants, but her enmity towards Spain was still more bitter. If Elizabeth would connect herself with a French prince, France and England might enter into an alliance with the Protestants of the Netherlands against Philip, and the French frontier would be extended to the Rhine.²

The projected marriage of Elizabeth to a French Roman Catholic prince had never been popular in England, and events were now impending which could not fail to increase the aversion. During the last two years there had been a cessation of civil war in France; and when Charles IX. agreed to give his sister in marriage to the young Protestant King of Navarre, the whole French nobility, Protestant as well as Catholic, were summoned to witness the festivities at Paris, which city Admiral Coligny, the chief of the Protestant party, had for some time feared to enter. It was not without warning, nor in ignorance of his personal danger, that Coligny then obeyed the summons.

The royal marriage, which took place on August 18, was followed by three days of festivity. Among the noblemen who attended the tournament at the gayest and most splendid court of Europe was the young Sir Philip Sidney, nephew of the Earl of Leicester, one of the most accomplished of English courtiers. But murder lurked behind the revels. On the 22nd, Coligny was wounded by a shot aimed at him from the window of a house occupied by a dependent of the Duke of Guise. Suspicion of treachery was immediately excited, but was partly allayed by

¹ Froude, iv. 363. Lingard, viii. 92.

² Froude, iv. 225.

the king's assurances of good-will. Queen Catherine and her son, the Duke of Anjou, had determined on the general destruction of the Protestant party. They represented to the weak-minded Charles that Admiral Coligny and his friends were plotting his destruction, and that the danger was too imminent to allow of delay. The one party, they declared, could only escape by the sacrifice of the other. Charles, in terror, consented to the projected massacre, declaring his hope that it might be so complete that no Huguenot would survive to bear witness against him. A list was made of the intended victims, but, perhaps, even Queen Catherine did not apprehend the awful result so soon as the mob should be let loose upon its prey.¹ On the night preceding this ever-memorable day of St. Bartholomew, all was still at the Louvre. At two o'clock Charles was placed between his mother and Anjou on an open balcony to await the issue. A pistol-shot was heard, and Charles became much agitated. The bell of a church tolled; the work of destruction had commenced. Before five o'clock, Admiral Coligny and most of his friends had been murdered, and their bodies were treated with every indignity. Numbers of the Protestants were slain in their beds; no regard was paid to age, sex, or condition, and during the savage excitement even many Catholics also suffered. At length, on the evening of that dreadful day, the king attempted, although for some time in vain, to recall the infuriated people. The massacre, which continued during the night and for two following days, was not confined to Paris. Efforts were made by the court to escape the opprobrium of such bloodshed, by imputing it to an affray between the partisans of Guise and Coligny. But the Duke of Guise refused to bear the odium, and the King of France was obliged to acknowledge before the Parliament of Paris that the troops had received orders from himself. Those who suffered death in Paris were variously numbered at from two to ten thousand, but the entire number murdered has been computed at between fifty and sixty thousand. 'Indignation created heretics faster than the sword could destroy them.'² The first news of the massacre at Paris was brought to England by panic-stricken Huguenots,

¹ Froude, iv. 403.

² Froude, iv. 407; v. 12. See Boileau, satire 12:—

'Cent mille faux zélés, le fer en main courants,
Allèrent attaquer leurs amis, leurs parents,
Et, sans distinction, dans tout sein hérétique,
Pleins de joie enfoncer un poignard catholique :
Car quel lion, quel tigre, égale en cruauté
Une injuste fureur qu'arme la pitié ?'

who had crossed the Channel in open boats ; and bitter were the denunciations against all Roman Catholics from the Protestant pulpits, accompanied by demands for the speedy execution of the Queen of Scots. When Elizabeth admitted the French ambassador to her court at Woodstock, about the middle of September, when she, her ministers, and all the attendants were dressed in mourning, the ambassador himself afterwards described the oppressive silence of the assembly, as well as Elizabeth's cold and severe demeanour. He tried to throw blame on Coligny, urging that the king had been in danger, and to attribute the excessive slaughter to the excited people of Paris.

Elizabeth gravely expressed horror at the conduct of a sovereign who could expose his own subjects to death, and asked for proofs of the alleged Protestant conspiracy. But when La Mothe Fénelon ventured to hope that the queen would not renounce her promise to be godmother to the expected heir of the French crown, she did not discourage him. The queen's horror against the perpetrators of the late atrocities was far less deep than that of her Protestant subjects, who wished her to break off all treaty of friendship with France. On the birth of a French princess in October, Elizabeth fulfilled her promise by sending the Earl of Worcester as her proxy, to attend the baptism—a proceeding offensive to numbers of English Protestants. A privateer attacked the vessel conveying the earl, but it escaped with the loss of four men.¹

Troops of Huguenots, eager to escape with their bare lives, were arriving on the shores of England. Those who remained closed the gates of La Rochelle, their city of refuge, against the king's troops, and implored aid from England, of which they received sufficient to prolong their resistance until a secure peace could be negotiated.

At the close of 1569 the first public Exchange built in London was completed by the efforts and subscriptions of Sir Thomas Gresham and the citizens ; and, to ensure the success of the undertaking, the queen was requested to visit it. Elizabeth liked on fitting occasions to meet her people, and on January 23, 1571, she went from Somerset House, her palace in the Strand, dined in Bishopsgate Street with Sir Thomas Gresham, and, after surveying the new building, directed a herald to proclaim the opening of the Royal Exchange. The shops surrounding the enclosure were soon occupied, and the under-

¹ Froude, p. 436. Lord Worcester was known to have a leaning towards Popery.

taking prospered. The building stood until it was destroyed in 1666 by the great fire of London, when the statues of the kings which adorned it were burnt, but that of Gresham escaped destruction.

That which constantly diminished Elizabeth's popularity was the want of cordial agreement in political and religious views between her and her Protestant subjects. At the time of the revolt of the Netherlands in 1572, when the news reached England that Flushing had risen against its garrison and fired upon the fleet of the Duke of Alva, the excitement in London was uncontrollable, and money was lavishly poured from the Protestant churches to be converted into guns and powder for service against the Spaniards. Hundreds of English volunteers joined the companies of Flemish exiles who departed to join their countrymen, and the cry became general, both in Parliament and beyond its walls, that the detested Spaniard should be expelled for ever from the United Provinces. The bishops petitioned the queen to declare war and complete the work.¹

But it was in vain that Elizabeth was urged by the English Parliament, and tempted by the offers of the Prince of Orange, to put herself at the head of the Protestant cause, accepting the sovereign rule, or, if she preferred it, the Protectorship of Holland and Zealand. She did not wish for a war with Spain, and was willing, both from apprehensions regarding Ireland, and from her own political leaning, that the States of Holland should remain a Spanish province. Elizabeth and Philip had some points of resemblance. They both discouraged any violent manifestations of religious zeal, but were carried forward in spite of themselves by the more violent partialities of their subjects.

It was a favourite practice of Elizabeth to travel through different parts of England, staying for some weeks at the residence of one of her nobles. These 'royal progresses' were very expensive to the noblemen whom she thus honoured, and to the towns at which she stayed; but the country people flocked gladly to behold her, and she gained popularity by the affability with which she received their petitions. In the year 1575 she was for nineteen days the guest, at Kenilworth Castle, of the Earl of Leicester, who spared no expense in providing attractive displays for her amusement. A temporary bridge, seventy feet in length, was thrown across the valley, extending to the gate of the castle. A 'Lady of the Lake' appeared on a floating

¹ Froude, *iv.* 374; May, 1572.

island, and recited complimentary poetry, and music and theatrical entertainments were varied by stag-hunts and bear-baiting. Three years afterwards Leicester again entertained her Majesty at Wanstead House.

The Duke of Anjou had succeeded his brother, Charles IX., on the throne of France. The Duke d'Alençon, who was henceforward called Duke of Anjou by most historians, received, in 1578, an appeal from the United Provinces for help against Spain.¹ After gaining some successes in the Low Countries, Alençon signified to the States that he still aspired to the hand of Queen Elizabeth, and that she would not approve of any powerful interference with the affairs of the Netherlands. He suddenly determined to have a personal interview with the queen, whom he had hitherto only courted by proxy, travelled in disguise, and arrived without notice at Greenwich. Elizabeth was flattered, and after a stay of only a few days in England, Alençon departed with the most encouraging hopes concerning both his proposed marriage and his prospects in the Netherlands.

Notwithstanding agricultural prosperity and the impulse given to manufacture by the Flemings, who 'taught England in fact to weave its own fleece,' the uncertain succession and complications with foreign powers left the country in an anxious position. In August, 1578, Elizabeth extended her journey to Norwich, a principal seat of the woollen manufacture, and one of the most considerable places in the kingdom, but which, from its remoteness, had rarely been visited by a sovereign. She was received with great honour, and the mayor, after a Latin oration, presented her with a silver cup containing pieces of gold. A church had been provided where the refugees from the Netherlands might hold public worship in their own language. In the midst of the customary pageant, one of those absurd exhibitions, in which on this occasion there appeared a figure of Mercury dressed in a blue satin doublet lined with cloth-of-gold, drawn along in a gaily-painted coach, the minister of the Dutch church had an opportunity of offering to the queen the grateful homage of his community.²

The spirit of commercial enterprise had been encouraged by the recent discovery of unexplored regions in America. Francis Drake, the celebrated navigator, who had raised himself from the position of a common sailor to the rank of commander, had availed himself of the enmity between England and Spain to cruise among the Spanish colonies for plunder, in which he met

¹ Froude always gives to this prince the title of Alençon.

² Miss Aikin's 'Court of Queen Elizabeth,' ii. 59.

with great success. On November 15, Drake set sail for the Pacific, 'nominally to find openings for English commerce,' but with private instructions from Elizabeth which he might employ at discretion. In those five ships 'lay the germ of the ocean-empire of Great Britain.'¹ The English Channel had long been a scene of strife incompatible with the good order and regulations of modern society. Pirates and smugglers had increased greatly in strength, and although excuse was made for thus retaliating the injustice practised in Spain on the Protestants, the rapine of the pirate-luggers which infested the Narrow Seas was limited by no consideration of creed or country. When the Spaniards complained of these acts, Elizabeth declared herself unable to check her corsairs, as Philip pleaded that he had no power over the orders of the Inquisition.²

The enmity between Spain and the Netherlands was still further exasperated. Philip set a price upon the head of the Prince of Orange; and the prince persuaded the Northern States to declare that they would never again submit to the Spanish government.

In April, 1581, the King of France sent a splendid embassy to obtain signature of a treaty of marriage between D'Alençon and Elizabeth; the embassy was received with much honour, and the duke shortly afterwards arrived in person. In spite of the weakness and credulous vanity which made the queen, although in her forty-ninth year, not totally averse to proposals from so young a prince, she knew that a connexion between the Low Countries and France might be contrary to the interest of English commerce, and feared that her marriage would prove as hateful to her subjects as that of Mary with Philip of Spain.³ Religious zeal in England spoke more loudly than commercial jealousy. A French prince, tainted by the bloodshed of St. Bartholomew, encountered from all parties one common cry of disapproval. At this crisis, a Puritan lawyer of Lincoln's Inn, named Stubbs, a friend of the poet Spenser, had the temerity to write a pamphlet strongly censuring the projected union. Queen Mary's worst cruelties were probably instigated by her eagerness to protect Philip, and by an Act of her reign, which many lawyers had believed to be obsolete, notwithstanding the intercession of the French ambassador, Stubbs, as the writer, and Page, as the vendor, of the obnoxious work, were both condemned to lose their right hands on a scaffold erected before the palace of Westminster.⁴

¹ Froude, v. 94.² *Ib.*, 142-144.³ Lingard, viii. 118.⁴ Froude, v. 162. Lingard, viii. 122. Stubbs also suffered imprisonment for

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but returned with only one, the 'Golden Hind;' but that vessel was laden with treasure amounting to £800,000, and England exulted in the fame of the first navigator who had in one voyage sailed round the world. The queen wavered between admiration for Drake's skill and success and dread of the hostility of Philip, who branded him as a pirate. Thus, when the English ambassador at Madrid complained of the Spanish aid rendered, in the Pope's name, to the Irish rebels, he was met by counter-charges on the score of Drake's attacks on the settlements in Spanish America.

A portion of the treasure was given up to satisfy Spain; the rest is believed to have been shared by the queen, the commander, and the royal favourites. In the April following, Elizabeth partook of a banquet in the cabin of the successful ship, and conferred upon Drake the honour of knighthood, with the gift of £1,000. At this time great anxiety was occasioned to the government by the arrival of a considerable number of Catholic priests, mostly Englishmen educated at Popish colleges on the Continent, who were sent over by the King of Spain and the Pope to advance the Catholic cause. Elizabeth had boasted, and not without justice, that during the first twenty years of her reign no Catholic had suffered the severest penalties on account of his religion. It was true that the laws were severe against the professors of that faith; but the queen had used her influence in repressing the persecuting zeal of her own bishops. Priests might still be found saying mass in private houses in England, and nuns were living unmolested under the roofs of Catholic ladies.¹ But after the promulgation of the Pope's terrible bull, these differences of faith could no longer be passed over as harmless. Every missionary became suspected of being concerned in a plot for the liberation of Mary, and possibly the assassination of Elizabeth. When Parliament assembled in January, 1581, the ministry claimed its aid against the Jesuits; and it responded by enacting that further penalties should be incurred by priests who ventured to perform the ceremonies of their religion. Attendance at church was required as the test of loyalty to the queen, and a fine of £20 per month was adjudged as the penalty for non-attendance. Precautions were devised against those priests who, often under some disguise, were employed as tutors in private families. After the passing of these severe statutes the magistrates were authorised in case of suspicion to send pursuivants to break open the doors of dwelling-

¹ Froude, v. 306-317.

houses, to examine the beds, and tear the tapestry from the walls, on the chance of discovering a lurking priest, or some of the ornaments used in Catholic worship.

The prisons were soon filled with suspected persons; indeed, Edmund Campian, and other priests accused of treasonable practices, suffered capital punishment on December 1, 1581.

The use of torture to elicit evidence from unwilling witnesses was common in Europe at this period; but English historians have declared with pride that the common law of England 'always abhorred the accursed mysteries of a prison-house,' and neither admitted of torture to procure confession nor of any penal infliction which was not warranted by a judicial sentence.¹ But this sacred law was set aside by the Privy Council under the Tudors, and the frequency with which the rack was used to extort evidence against the Catholics excited general indignation in Europe.

Elizabeth had been anxious to save the life of Campian, and it was thought expedient to publish two remarkable pamphlets, which have been attributed to the pen of Lord Burleigh, to repel the charge of cruelty. In the first of these it was asserted that numerous Catholics, lay and clerical, had lived in England in safety. Those only had been indicted for treason who had dared to uphold the papal bull against Elizabeth.

The second pamphlet, which appeared in January, 1584, undertook to justify severities, which could not be denied, on the ground of the common danger; but Elizabeth was so far aware of the odium attending such practices as to order the disuse of torture, and a paper was sent to her by Lord Burleigh recommending that treason should not be imputed to Roman Catholics unless they refused to bear arms against her enemies. 'Putting to death,' said Burleigh, was found 'no-ways to lessen the number of the suspected.'² But even the Catholic historian, Lingard, acknowledges that the government had reason to watch the attitude of the Roman Catholics 'with an eye of jealousy,' and to require security for their good conduct in case of danger.³

During all the time of her tedious imprisonment, Mary Stuart regarded the English Catholics as her friends, and the Catholic Powers of Europe as her allies. In 1582, she sent messages to the Pope and to the Duke of Guise, 'from her

¹ Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' i. 148.

² Hallam, i. 151. Lingard does not mention the use of torture after 1585. The first pamphlet ascribed to Lord Burleigh was called 'The Execution of Justice in England,' and appeared in 1583; the second in the year following.

³ Lingard, viii. 150.

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filled her with apprehensions of further evil, and naturally prepared her to accept any proposals which gave the faintest chance of her liberation. Under these circumstances, a new plan was organised between Mr. Babington, a young gentleman who had long professed a chivalrous attachment to Mary, an officer named Savage, who undertook to murder Elizabeth, and the Prince of Parma, who agreed to invade England with a large force. Mary gladly encouraged Babington, but warned him not to endanger her safety or his own by taking any step before the arrival of the Spanish forces in the following autumn. But, through the treachery of their emissaries, the plan was soon divulged to Walsingham, and on August 15 the leaders of the plot were committed to the Tower amidst the shouts and rejoicings of the citizens of London. Papers of the Queen of Scots were seized which testified to her participation in the design.

In September the trials of the conspirators took place. It was proved that Babington, Savage, and a Catholic priest named Ballard, had intended to murder Elizabeth; others had merely conspired to liberate Mary, but were subjected to the same cruel punishment then inflicted on those condemned for treason.

In the view of Elizabeth's Council the greatest offender, because the perpetual cause of offence in others, was the Queen of Scots herself, and, after much consultation, Elizabeth having issued a commission of forty-six of the highest persons in the realm to inquire into the guilt of Mary, ex-Queen of Scotland, she was removed to Fotheringay Castle in Northamptonshire, there to undergo a public trial. Mary at first refused to acknowledge the authority of the court, declaring that she would not so degrade the Scottish crown, but was induced to waive her objections. The Lord Chancellor Bromley, Lord Burleigh, Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Christopher Hatton, twenty-three earls and peers, and the principal judges and other distinguished persons, constituted the court. The charges brought against Mary alleged that she had conspired with foreigners and traitors both for the invasion of England and to compass the death of the queen. Numerous letters written by her, which had either been intercepted or found in her cabinet, testified her approval of the scheme of invasion designed at Paris, and that she had authorised her Scottish friends to remove her son from Scotland, and had expressed her readiness to make over to Philip of Spain her title to the

English throne.¹ The Council proposed that Mary should be removed for trial to the Tower of London, but Elizabeth refused her consent. She may have thought of that time, fifty years earlier, in her own early infancy, when her mother, Anne Boleyn, was there arraigned and speedily executed.

The evidence against Mary was confirmed by the testimony of her two secretaries, Nau and Curle, who had been previously brought to London for examination, but they were not confronted with her on the trial. At first Mary, not knowing the extent of the proofs against her, denied having held any communication with Babington. Unable to refute the evidence of her own letters, showing her approval of the French plan of invasion, she pleaded her right to use all means in her power for the recovery of her liberty, but solemnly denied that she had conspired against the life of Elizabeth. When proof was offered from one of her own letters to Babington that she knew and approved of the design, she urged that alterations had been made in the copies, in order to criminate her, upon which, Walsingham rose and protested that he had acted with perfect honour. After defending herself with much spirit during the two days' trial at Fotheringay, Mary demanded to be heard in full Parliament, or before Queen Elizabeth in Council.² The commissioners adjourned the court to meet at Westminster on October 25, when it was attended by a numerous assembly of members of both Houses of Parliament. Mary's secretaries were brought forward, but she remained immured in Fotheringay Castle.

On the 29th, the commissioners gave judgment that Mary, daughter of James V., commonly called the Queen of Scotland, had compassed and imagined divers matters tending to the hurt, death, and destruction of Queen Elizabeth. Lord Zouch alone excepted to the charge which involved Mary as an accomplice in Elizabeth's intended assassination.³ In spite of the shameful breach of legal rules, so general in trials for high treason during this reign, the evidence of Mary's agreement in the project against the life of Elizabeth has been considered by Hume and Hallam very strong; indeed, the researches of later historians have left no doubt as to her participation in the

¹ Mary had written to Mendoza that she disinherited her son in consequence of his obstinate persistency in the Protestant faith. 'Regarding more the interests of the Church than those of her own family,' she bequeathed her prospective rights to the King of Spain, but begged that her determination should be kept secret from both France and England.—Froude, xii. 234.

² Lingard, viii. 224-228.

³ *Ib.*

Babington conspiracy. She stood there, the palpable centre of the cabal formed by Rome and Spain against both the throne and life of Elizabeth. The English Parliament had called the prosecution of Mary 'their great cause,' an expression never applied, says Hallam, on any other occasion. In 1576, Mr. Peter Wentworth attacked Elizabeth in the House of Commons with so much severity, on account of her refusal to permit Mary's attainder, that he was sent by the queen to the Tower for a month. For Elizabeth under such circumstances to pardon Mary could not be expected, and it was perhaps scarcely within her power. Although it had been 'in violation of all natural, public, and municipal law' that the Queen of Scots was detained for nineteen years in England, it was now plainly the will of the nation and of the Parliament that she should suffer death.¹

But Elizabeth dreaded odium from the condemnation of the unfortunate queen, her royal cousin, and sought in every way to shift from herself the imputation of personal vengeance. The proceedings of the trial were laid before both Houses, and when the charges had been explained by the commissioners, Parliament united in a petition to the queen for the speedy execution of the law. Elizabeth returned thanks for their loyalty, and after three days of consideration asked their opinion whether there were no expedient by which her own life might be preserved without taking that of her kinswoman. After another long discussion, both Houses signified that they could find no way of safety except the speedy execution of Queen Mary.² On November 22, Mary was informed that Parliament had ratified the judgment of the court, and that she must prepare for death. She declared once more that she had never assented to the design against Elizabeth's life, proclaimed herself a victim for her religion, and asked for the services of her own chaplain. These were allowed her for a short time, and she wrote letters to her agent, the Archbishop of Glasgow, to the Duke of Guise, and to the Pope, all of which were preserved by her servants, and delivered after her death.³

When the judgment against Mary was known in London, the city was full of savage rejoicing; the Protestant monarchy was at last secure. Bonfires were lighted, church bells were rung, and the whole country exulted as the news was borne

¹ Hallam, i. 158-161, 256. Motley's 'History of the Netherlands,' ii. 104.

² Froude, xii. 293.

³ Lingard, viii. 232. Le Preau, Mary's almoner, was in the castle of Fotheringay, and attended her on this occasion, but was not allowed to be present at her death.—*Ib.*, 242.

along to the farthest glens of Cumberland. The phantom of civil war was vanishing into air. Elizabeth herself, however, was compelled to give audience to the French ambassador, who threatened her with his master's displeasure, and that of the other Catholic Powers. Although the French court had shown no great love for Mary Stuart, she was still Queen Dowager of France, and so long as she lived she obstructed the pretensions of Philip to the English crown.¹ Hearing of the rejoicings at her approaching doom, Mary, on December 3, wrote a last letter to Elizabeth praying that she might not be put privately to death, or in such a manner that it should appear to be her own act, that her body might be conveyed to France to be interred near the remains of her mother; also that she might send a farewell message to her son, and make some small bequests to her servants. This letter, written with earnest dignity, is said to have moved Elizabeth to tears, and the Earl of Leicester feared lest she should even then repent of her resolve.

The young King of Scotland, although caring little for a mother whom he had never known, was induced by the Scottish nobles to send a feeble remonstrance on her behalf. When we remember Elizabeth's vacillations before the Duke of Norfolk's execution, it does not seem unnatural that she wavered before signing the death-warrant of one whom she had so often called her royal sister. But we are compelled to believe that it was not so much from tenderness of heart as from dread of the world's future verdict that Elizabeth passed two months in apparent irresolution. There were many cases in the sixteenth century of the murder of exalted personages; treacherous plots were common incidents of political life, and it could not be difficult for Elizabeth to believe in Mary's guilt. It even appears that she was herself ready to instigate the secret assassination of Mary, and that the Scottish queen's last jailor, Sir Amyas Paulet, peremptorily refused to listen to the suggestion. This baseness, coupled with her subsequent ill-treatment of her secretary, Davison, have left the blackest stain on Elizabeth's memory.²

The warrant for Mary's execution had remained for six weeks in Davison's keeping, when, after the departure of the French and Scottish ambassadors, Elizabeth signed it, and bade him take it to the Great Seal. Although she afterwards declared

¹ Froude, xii. 271-304. When, three years before, Henry III. of France authorised his ambassador to support ostensibly the cause of Mary Stuart, he at the same time let him know that it might be injurious to France for Elizabeth to be free from apprehension respecting Scotland, as she might then give her aid to the French Protestants.—Lingard, viii. 165.

² Lingard, viii. 238. Hallam, i. 159, note. Froude, xii. 324.

that there was no need of haste, and the Council knew that by taking further steps they incurred the danger of the queen's disapprobation, they determined immediately to proceed to the execution.

It was the office of the Earl of Shrewsbury to announce to Mary, on February 7, that she would die on the following morning.

Although at first much agitated, she quickly rallied, and spent the few remaining hours in writing letters and in endeavours to requite the faithful services of those who had continued to soothe her long years of imprisonment. She asked for her almoner, but his attendance was denied her. She supped cheerfully, and is said to have slept for three or four hours. At the first break of day her sorrowing household assembled round her; and it was at her pressing entreaty, and on her promise that they would be quiet spectators of the last scene, that six of her attendants were allowed to be present. A scaffold had been raised in the great hall of the castle, which was covered with black serge, and in the presence of nearly two hundred spectators Mary advanced from her oratory, holding her crucifix in her hand. A white veil of delicate lawn covered her head, a golden crucifix hung from her neck. With perfect composure she ascended the scaffold, and sat down to hear the warrant read. She took an affecting leave of Melville, the steward of her household, and renewed her declarations that she had not taken any steps prejudicial to the interests of her son, and that she had never planned the death of the Queen of England. She was apparelled in black satin trimmed with velvet, and when this robe was removed she appeared completely dressed in crimson. With obtrusive pertinacity, the Dean of Peterborough urged her, even at this last hour, to give up the doctrines of her Church. Turning away from him, Mary repeated in Latin passages from the Psalms, and with quiet fortitude submitted to the stroke of the executioner. Young Talbot was immediately directed to carry the news to London; when he arrived at Greenwich the queen was mounting her horse, and it was not thought expedient to inform her officially of the event for which that afternoon all the church bells in London were ringing.¹

Elizabeth now endeavoured to persuade Europe that the execution of Mary had not been ordered by herself. On the following Saturday she summoned the Council, rebuked them severely,

¹ The last historian differs in a few particulars from Camden, whose report has been usually adopted.—Froude, xii. 331–333. Lingard gives the same description of Mary's dress (viii. 246, note).

and sent Davison to the Tower, although Burleigh and the other ministers implored her on their knees to forbear from imposing the charge of high treason, which such a committal implied, on one of her Privy Councillors.¹ Mary's corpse, embalmed and enclosed in lead, was some months later interred with royal pomp in Peterborough Cathedral by order of the queen, and was placed opposite the tomb of Queen Catherine of Arragon. Twenty-five years afterwards, King James ordered its removal to Westminster Abbey.²

A few months before Queen Mary's execution, the noblest and most accomplished man who had graced the English court perished in a small skirmish in the Netherlands. Sir Philip Sidney, nephew of the Earl of Leicester, dreading the evil influence which Spain and Rome might exert against England, had long urged the queen to assist openly the oppressed inhabitants of the Netherlands. Unless he could prevail in that object, he wished to join Drake's expedition, found a colony in South America, and attack the Spaniards in the New World. Elizabeth refused to concur in that design; but, to satisfy Sidney's ardent desire for military service, made him, in 1585, governor of Flushing, which had become an English possession. His military career was soon ended: he fell in an engagement with the Spanish forces before the walls of Zutphen, in Guelderland, and died of his wounds a few days later, after severe suffering.

It has been often told how Sidney, grievously wounded, and about to drink the water brought by his attendants to quench his thirst, was struck by the ghastly countenance of a fallen soldier, and passed the cup to him, exclaiming, 'Thy necessity is greater than mine,' words which he little thought would be remembered, but which have deeply attached his countrymen to his memory. It is said that the government of the United Provinces proposed to build for Sidney as fair a tomb as any prince had in Christendom.³ But England rightly claimed the duty of performing the last rites for one of the worthiest of her sons. His body lay in state for some days, and was interred in St. Paul's Cathedral, on February 16, 1587, in the presence of seven deputies from Holland and of numerous distinguished Englishmen. So great was the national grief at the untimely fate of one so much beloved, that it is said that on this occasion mourning was first generally worn throughout this

¹ Froude, xii. 346

² Lingard, viii. 250, note.

³ Miss Aikin's 'Elizabeth,' ii. 154. Sidney died at Arnheim, attended by his wife, who was a daughter of Walsingham. He was only thirty-three years of age.

country. The universities poured forth praises and lamentations, but tears of real grief were shed for Sidney in the cottages of Wilton and Penshurst, where he had been the benefactor of the poor.

After the execution of Mary, a month appears to have elapsed before the official notice was sent to King James. Elizabeth then wrote to assure him of her displeasure at the hasty execution of the sentence; declaring also that the rights and expectations of the King of Scots should be in no way injured by his mother's condemnation. These assurances, joined to a present of £4,000, speedily quieted James's resentment—a sentiment rather due to the suggestion of the Scottish Parliament than personal to himself. The King of France, engaged in civil war at home, rather rejoiced at than deplored an event which lessened the importance of his personal enemy, the Duke of Guise.¹ But, although the King of Scots was appeased, and Henry III. of France indifferent, the cause of the Pope and the injured Catholics did not long remain without a champion. The jealousy of France and Spain, hitherto Elizabeth's safeguard, now no longer availed to secure peace.

Philip II. was decidedly averse to the prospect of James Stuart's succession to the crown of Elizabeth. However closely allied to the royal family of France, he yet wanted the Catholic faith.² Personally, also, the King of Spain had suffered many injuries from England. Her bold seamen had assailed his subjects in America, and had captured his treasure-ships on the high seas. The insurgents in the Netherlands had been aided by Englishmen and sometimes by English money. And now, by the public trial and execution of the Queen of Scots, an insult had been offered to the majesty of sovereigns. The Pope's anathemas were ready, and Philip, the most powerful of Christian monarchs, deemed himself justified in expecting the support of all the injured Catholics. He endeavoured to conceal his resentment until the preparations for his great undertaking were complete.

A forest in Flanders had been levelled; the dockyards of Antwerp and Dunkirk swarmed with artificers, and the rivers and canals were covered with flat-bottomed boats which were destined for the invasion of England; and yet Elizabeth and her great adviser, Lord Burleigh, were in uncertainty whether the storm would burst on England or on the insurgents of the

¹ Lingard, viii. 256. Henry III. shortly afterwards caused the Duke of Guise to be assassinated, December, 1588.

² Froude, xii. 119.

Netherlands. But in March, 1588, there was no longer room for doubt. All Europe was ringing with the mighty preparations made by Philip for the conquest of England, and the anticipated glory of the expedition attracted volunteers from some of the noblest families in Europe. On every side men were hastening to enlist under the Duke of Parma, the general appointed by Philip.

Numerous copies of the Pope's bull were stored at Antwerp which had been translated into English ready for circulation—that bull in which Sixtus V. denounced Elizabeth as a usurper, and solemnly conferred her kingdom upon Philip of Spain, defender of the Christian faith, to be held as a tributary of Rome. According to this document, Elizabeth deserved punishment on account of her injurious treatment of English Catholics, and her deposition would be an act of virtue. A pamphlet, ascribed to Cardinal Allen, was also prepared for distribution in England, which accused Elizabeth of every crime.¹ A bold attack by Drake on the Spanish fleet and the coast of Portugal, in the spring of the year 1587, had already retarded for a year the completion of Philip's undertaking. Elizabeth hardly ventured to approve of acts which might be called piratical, and which would lessen the chance of yet arresting the invasion by negotiation.

The ministers who had lately employed their utmost skill in unravelling Catholic plots, which had been punished with so much severity, were naturally suspicious of the loyalty of Roman Catholic Englishmen. But Elizabeth had faith in the patriotism of all her subjects, and she was right. 'In that memorable year,' says Hallam in an eloquent passage, 'when the dark cloud gathered round our coasts, when Europe stood by in fearful suspense to behold what would be the result of that great cast in the game of human politics, in that agony of the Protestant faith and English name, they (the English Catholics) stood the trial of their spirits without swerving from their allegiance.'²

Elizabeth's main strength consisted in the willing obedience of her subjects. The royal navy could number only thirty-four ships of war. The Council applied to the corporation of London, asking how many ships the city could supply for the public service. After consultation, the city entreated the Council, 'in sign of their perfect love and loyalty to prince and country, to accept ten thousand men and thirty ships amply furnished; and,' adds the chronicler, 'even as London, London-like, gave

¹ Motley's 'History of the Netherlands,' ii. 400. Lingard, viii. 279 note, 445 note.

² Hallam, i. 162.

precedent, the whole kingdom kept true rank and equipage.' Eighteen vessels were added by private persons.

The chief command was entrusted to Lord Howard of Effingham, high admiral, a man of resolution, whose want of experience was supplied by his lieutenant, Drake, and by Hawkins, Frobisher, and others who had lately proved their skill and daring in voyages to distant lands. An army of 30,000 men was ordered to undertake the defence of London, the command of which was given, by the queen's partiality, to the Earl of Leicester, and a camp was formed at Tilbury to guard the entrance of the Thames. No event could have occurred more certain to rouse in all classes of Englishmen one feeling of patriotic loyalty.

When the plan of an invasion of England by the Duke of Guise had been under consideration, the conspirators (Mary's friends) were careful to promise that all foreign soldiers should withdraw as soon as Mary occupied the throne of Elizabeth. And now that Mary no longer lived, when it was the question between the Protestant Elizabeth and the King of Spain as the Pope's champion, in every county the Catholics repaired to the standard of the lord-lieutenant, imploring that they might not be suspected of readiness to barter the national independence for their religion. The venerable Lord Montague brought a troop of horse to the queen's standard at Tilbury, and young lords and gentlemen, without distinction of creed, laid hold of every sloop in their power in which to take their share of the danger and the glory of defending the shores of England.

No printed newspaper had been hitherto regularly published; the intense interest of the time brought forth 'The English Mercury,' in April, 1588, which appears to have been issued every day whilst the danger lasted, although not afterwards continued.¹

Elizabeth manifested at this crisis the courage which had always characterised the Tudors. She had previously dreaded to excite Philip's anger, and had acted shabbily towards the Reformers abroad; but when the danger was at her gates she showed no signs of fear. She even offered to go to the coast and animate the troops by her presence, but Leicester dissuaded her from such rashness.²

It was on May 28 that the 'Armada,' after waiting a month at Lisbon for favourable weather, at length set sail.

¹ Papers, called 'News out of Holland,' were published in England in 1619.— See Miss Aikin's 'Elizabeth,' ii. 233; and 'Penny Cyclopædia,' article 'Newspapers.'

² Lingard, viii. 284.

The size of some of the Spanish ships appeared enormous at a time when a vessel of 1,300 tons was rarely seen; and in some of these floating castles there were splendid state apartments, chapels, and bands of music. But these large vessels were ill-fitted for the trying waves of the Bay of Biscay; a violent storm from the west scattered the fleet, and all the ships sustained considerable damage before the Duke of Medina Sidonia, the admiral, could again collect them in the harbour of Corunna.

England had still another month of anxious preparation, during which the clergy excited their hearers against the Pope and the Spaniards, while the coast population was trained to meet the invaders if they should gain footing on English ground. On both sides there was much of that enthusiasm which prepares men for victory. The Spanish fleet contained, indeed, a motley company from every part of the world; but with these were exiled priests and young men from Scotland and England, too faithful followers of the lately martyred Catholics.

On July 29 the Spanish fleet reached the mouth of the Channel. Long before the Spaniards saw the Lizard Point, the English watchers had perceived their approach, and the numerous 'beacon-fires along the coast told England that her hour of trial was come.'¹ The 'Armada' formed a crescent, the horns of which were some miles asunder, and advanced proudly, filling the spectators with awe. Lord Howard resolved not to risk an immediate engagement, but for the moment to pursue its course and cut off straggling vessels. So difficult to the Spaniards was the navigation of the Channel, that six days passed before their admiral cast anchor off Calais. The English commanders determined to try the experiment of fireships, which had been successfully used at Antwerp, and employed the Italian engineer who was then fortifying the banks of the Thames. Meantime, Dutch vessels of various sizes were trying to prevent the Duke of Parma from leaving their ports with nearly 28,000 men to join in the invasion of England, when suddenly eight fireships were seen rapidly drifting down upon the 'Armada.' The alarm of the Spaniards was great; cables were hastily cut, and some of the largest ships became entangled.

The English admiral was on the watch to pursue the advantage, and, before the commander of the 'Armada' gave the signal to retreat, nearly all the largest vessels which had

¹ Froude, xii. 457.

just threatened the English shore were damaged or disabled. From Tuesday night, the 9th, till Friday, August 13, Howard, Drake, and Frobisher, in command of the English fleet, followed the 'Armada' on the North Sea. On the 14th there was a tremendous gale, from which the English ships escaped to the shelter of Margate Roads, and the violence of the storm completed the destruction of the Spanish fleet. The damaged vessels, ill-managed and without pilots, were driven on the steep cliffs of Norway, or wrecked on the coasts of Scotland or Ireland.¹

The time was now come when Leicester could safely recommend his sovereign to proceed to the camp at Tilbury, for the danger was already over; the 'Armada' which had threatened to overturn her throne was struggling with the winds, and Elizabeth received the glad homage of her exulting people as she rode through the ranks, bearing in her hand a marshal's truncheon. Some historians have reported her spirited address to the troops; Lingard has omitted it, with the remark that it might have been prepared for her previously, but had become unnecessary. She could not exhort her soldiers to fight after the enemy had disappeared.²

Of the 134 vessels which sailed from Corunna in July, only 53 returned to Spain, and these had been rendered worthless. The 'Armada,' vaunted as invincible, had been utterly annihilated by the combined strength of English seamen, fireships, and the winds of heaven. Such was for England the happy conclusion of that enterprise on which Philip had expended so much costly and anxious preparation. So numerous were the losses of life in the noble families of Spain, that Philip issued an edict forbidding the wearing of mourning garments.³ The signal discomfiture of an armament which would have endangered our national existence was hailed with joy by Protestants throughout Europe.

On the following Sunday, Elizabeth went in state to St. Paul's, magnificently attended by her nobles. The streets were hung with blue cloth in honour of the navy, and the colours taken from the enemy were carried in triumph. But, although Elizabeth could not overlook the important services of the lord-admiral and his officers, it was her pleasure to consider that the country was also much indebted to the Earl of Leicester, on whom she intended to bestow some high reward,

¹ There is discrepancy of dates: Lingard relates that the storm arose on August 8; according to others it was on the 14th.

² Lingard, viii. 285, note.

³ Motley, ii. Froude, xii. 455.

when the earl suddenly died from an attack of fever. The death of a nobleman so incompetent to the high offices conferred upon him, so depraved in private life, was by no means regretted by the nation; but the loss of his society rendered Elizabeth's position still more lonely.¹

The young nobleman who next won Elizabeth's special favour was the son of that Earl of Essex who had in the year 1572, according to his own proposal, entered upon a plan for colonising a district of the province of Ulster. He had agreed with the queen to pay half the expenses, for which he was to be reimbursed by the possession of one-half of the colony. But the undertaking failed, and, after incurring debts in Ireland, he returned to England to meet the queen's displeasure at his inability to discharge the large sum which by contract he owed to the exchequer. He was soon afterwards sent again to Ireland with the title of Earl Marshal, and died in poverty at Dublin in 1576, when his eldest son was only ten years old. He wrote, on the day before his death, a touching letter to Elizabeth, specially imploring her protection for his son, and requesting that Lord Burleigh and the lord chamberlain (Lord Sussex) might direct his education. University training at that time began early, and by Lord Burleigh's direction the young earl was sent immediately to Trinity College, Cambridge. It was not until the year 1584, when he was in his seventeenth year, that he was introduced at court. The marriage of his mother, the Countess of Essex, to Lord Leicester, displeased the queen, but she still evinced friendliness to the son, renouncing at once her fee as his guardian, and promising the remission of his father's debt. When the 'Armada' was approaching, she appointed him captain of cavalry, and soon afterwards bestowed on him the order of the Garter—early promotion which apparently increased the impetuosity of his temper. In March, 1589, the queen was besought by Parliament to retaliate on Philip by authorising the invasion of Spain. Elizabeth praised the spirit which suggested the proposal, but declared that her funds were insufficient. If she were to provide ships of war and a few bands of veteran soldiers, other forces must be furnished by the zeal of her subjects. A ready response was given by an association quickly formed, at the head of which were Norris and Drake, the first military and naval commanders, and an armament of nearly 200 sail, carrying 21,000 men, was soon collected in Plymouth harbour.

¹ Concerning the general repute of Leicester, see Hallam, i. 124-167.

The young Lord Essex, weary of the monotony of court life, longed to join the expedition, but feared a refusal if he asked the queen's permission. He ventured to act without it, suddenly left the court, and rode as fast as possible to Plymouth, where he embarked immediately to join the fleet, which had already sailed for Spain. He had but just departed when the Earl of Huntingdon arrived, despatched under the queen's orders to arrest her fugitive favourite and bring him back a prisoner.

Drake had made fruitless efforts to gain possession of the city of Corunna before he was joined by Essex, who waited at sea and accompanied the English fleet to the coast of Portugal as a volunteer. Portugal was then a part of the Spanish dominions, and Don Antonio, who had unsuccessfully contended for that sovereignty with Philip, joined the English expedition in hope of gaining the Portuguese crown. But no Portuguese sword was drawn in favour of Antonio, while sickness and want of provisions soon obliged the English commanders to abandon their enterprise. They took possession of Vigo, but their small conquests, which were artfully magnified in their reports, proved no compensation for their losses. Not more than half of the men, and still fewer of the gentlemen, survived at the end of May to return to England.

The ill-success of the expedition was concealed as much as possible both from the queen and the nation, and the English people exulted in their reputed triumph over Spain.¹ The gallantry and humanity of Essex had been highly praised in the despatches of the commanders, and, notwithstanding his disobedience, he still held the first place in Elizabeth's favour on his return. He found a rival, however, in the young Sir Walter Raleigh, who was both an able soldier and a skilful courtier. Raleigh frequently attended the queen on her walks, and on one occasion, of which history has taken careful note, the path being wet, he threw down his rich cloak for her to tread upon, an action so pleasing to the queen that he soon afterwards received the honour of knighthood, and was made captain of the guard. Raleigh soon afterwards retired to Ireland, where a large tract of land was assigned him.

Terrible events had taken place in France about this time. Henry III., who had instigated the murder of the Duke of Guise, and of his brother the cardinal, was himself murdered on August 1, 1589, by a young Dominican friar. His successor was the Protestant King of Navarre, descended from St.

¹ Lingard, viii. 308.

Louis by the youngest branch. With the hope of at once extinguishing the civil war, Henry IV. abandoned the championship of the Protestants, and engaged that the Roman Catholic worship alone should be publicly professed, except in those towns in which Protestantism had been already authorised.

This concession did not, however, satisfy the staunch partisans of either party, and nine Protestant regiments refused to serve a sovereign who had promised to support the Roman Catholic faith.¹ The king must still secure his throne by the sword, and Elizabeth proved her friendship by sending him the aid of 4,000 soldiers, commanded by Lord Willoughby, and a gift, still more difficult to furnish, of £20,000 in gold to pay his foreign troops. The English soldiers fought bravely, but suffered severely in several actions, and the survivors were dismissed with thanks at the beginning of the following year. Philip now endeavoured to wrest the duchy of Brittany from France, upon which Henry IV. asked for aid from England; and, after some delay, a loan and a subsidiary army of 3,000 men were granted. After repeated entreaties, the queen allowed the young Earl of Essex to lead another expedition into France, in August, 1591, but the forces under his command were too inconsiderable to gain any great success.

It was not only in military operations that Elizabeth had reason to dread Spanish influence. Although the principal English Catholics had remained loyal during the threatened invasion, a powerful Spanish party long existed, headed by Cardinals Allen and Parsons, which hoped to restore the Catholic religion, and to place England once more under a Catholic sovereign. A tract, published by this association in 1595, entitled 'A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crown of England,' produced a great sensation both in England and on the Continent. After declaring the laws of succession variable according to circumstances, and liable to depend on similarity of religion, the claim of the Infanta, daughter of Philip, was put forward therein as that of a lineal descendant of John of Gaunt, son of Edward III. The English government was naturally alarmed, and thought it possible that those who tried thus to influence opinion might persuade themselves that they would 'render a service to mankind by the removal of a woman who appeared to them to be a sanguinary and unprincipled tyrant.' Suspicion was directed towards a Jewish physician named Lopez, retained in the queen's service, and

¹ Lingard, viii. 312.

intercepted letters proved that a plot had been formed to set fire to the fleet.¹

The continuance of conspiracies offered plausible justification for the persecution of the Catholics.

The Earl of Arundel, son of the late Duke of Norfolk, was considered by the Roman Catholic party as their hereditary chief, and had been consequently exposed to the suspicion of the government. Aware of his danger, Arundel determined to withdraw from the country.

In April, 1585, he addressed to the queen, from his castle of Arundel, an earnest and eloquent letter, deprecating her censure and pleading his loyalty. But the English court was beset with spies; the vessel in which Arundel embarked was overtaken, and his attempted flight was adduced against him as evidence of guilt. He was sentenced to pay a fine of £10,000, and to be imprisoned during the queen's pleasure. Three years afterwards, it having been deposed against him that he had prayed for the success of the Armada, he was brought to trial at Westminster Hall upon the charge of high treason. Although no conclusive evidence could be brought against him, the Peers found him guilty, but Burleigh and Hatton advised the queen to spare his life. For several years this unfortunate nobleman remained in prison, liable at any time to be led to execution. In 1595 he was taken ill, and, after some weeks, died, in the eleventh year of his imprisonment.²

Henry IV. of France, who continued at war with Spain, repeatedly urged Elizabeth for aid, which she was reluctant to grant. But in 1596, reports of the preparations for war going on in the Spanish harbours excited general alarm in England; and when, in April of that year, the Spaniards took possession of Calais, Elizabeth apprehended that they might proceed with the greater ease to attempt another invasion. These fears, and the earnest expostulations of Lord Howard, the high admiral, and of Essex, at length induced the queen to send out an expedition against Cadiz, entrusting the command of the land forces to Essex, but, to restrain his impetuosity, ordering him to take the advice of a council of war. A fleet of 150 sail, carrying 14,000 men, accordingly left Plymouth on June 1, and at the end of three weeks cast anchor off Cadiz. The victory of the English commanders over the

¹ Lingard, viii. 319. Lopez acknowledged having received presents from the Spanish court, for which he had made general offers of service.

² Lingard, viii. 186, 292-294.

Spanish fleet was immediately followed by the attack made by Essex on the town, and Cadiz, with all its merchandise, surrendered to the English. The victory was unsullied by cruelty towards the defenceless. Essex, although impetuous, was humane, and the queen's instructions that no blood should wantonly be shed were carefully obeyed.

The nuns and other women, numbering about three thousand, were protected on their way to the port of St. Mary, and were allowed to take with them their jewels and clothes.¹ Never before had Philip received so disastrous a defeat. He lost thirteen men-of-war and immense magazines of provisions, and the defences of Cadiz, which were the strongest in Spain, were levelled to the ground.

Essex wished to proceed farther into Spain, or, at least, to retain possession of Cadiz, but was restrained by the Council, and the fleet returned to England about ten weeks after it had set forth. The people hailed the arrival of the victors with delight; but Elizabeth was disturbed by reports of the amount of captured treasure, and sent an ungracious message to the commanders, saying that the expedition had cost her £50,000, and that they who had received the plunder could remunerate their men. Essex was some time at court before he was fully reinstated in the queen's favour.

Philip was burning for revenge; his fleet arrived from the West Indies with a large treasure; his people were willing to support him; and, flattering himself that his daughter, the Infanta, might at length obtain the English throne, he gave orders for the preparation of another armada. Under these circumstances, Elizabeth allowed another armament to be provided, giving the command to Lord Essex, under whom Sir Walter Raleigh consented to serve.

Essex anticipated that he should destroy the Spanish fleet and make conquests among the Azores; he was no longer to be curbed by a council, and set off from Plymouth about July 9, 1597, in great hope of speedy success. But he had not proceeded more than forty leagues when his fleet encountered a severe storm, which drove them back to port. The earl's ship was a wreck, and few of the gentlemen volunteers who had embarked with him would continue in the service. Essex sailed again, but with a smaller force, and reached the Azores; some of the islands submitted, but the Spanish fleet coming from the Indies, the prize of which he was in search, escaped. In October he was compelled to direct his course homeward

¹ Lingard, viii. 326.

with prizes which he knew to be insufficient compensation. Before reaching the English shore his fleet again encountered a storm, which at the same time dispersed the Spanish fleet and drove it back with much loss upon the coast of Spain. The Isle of Wight or some Cornish port thus escaped an intended surprise.

Elizabeth, indeed, might have congratulated herself on this her second release from a great danger, but she was dissatisfied with Essex, and lamented that her treasure had been wasted without result. After a short time, however, she received him again into favour, and bestowed upon him the title of Earl Marshal, which gave him precedence of the lord admiral.

The question of continuing the war with Spain was the subject of warm discussion in the Council; Lord Burleigh being the advocate of peace, and the Earl of Essex still pressing the necessity of further military operations. But both Philip and the King of France were weary of the war. Philip, aware of his own decline, wished to leave peace to his successor, and Henry IV. longed for the power of appeasing the dissensions by which France had been convulsed so long.

Notwithstanding the reluctance with which Elizabeth's aid had been sent to France, England and Holland showed themselves for some time averse to peace.

Henry felt that peace was necessary to France, and in May, 1598, he signed a treaty with Spain by which he recovered Calais and every other place which he had lost during the war.¹ Anxious to appease religious enmity, he had just previously granted the Protestants many important privileges by the celebrated 'Edict of Nantes,' and he continued during the rest of his reign to use all his power in healing the wounds inflicted on his country by civil strife and fanaticism.²

The year 1598 was signalised by the death of Lord Burleigh, the ablest of Elizabeth's ministers, who had presided in her cabinet for forty years; and also by that of Philip II., England's determined foe. The death of Lord Burleigh has been considered a great misfortune to the Earl of Essex, for although they were frequently opposed to each other in the Council, the old minister felt strong personal regard for the young nobleman who had been consigned to his care in childhood, and often tried to moderate his want of discretion.

¹ Lingard, viii. 318.

² The Edict of Nantes is less famous in England than its 'revocation' in 1685, which proved so important to this country. In 1610, Henry IV., the best of French kings, was assassinated by the fanatic Ravallac.

About this time Essex had an unfortunate quarrel with the queen. A difference of opinion between Elizabeth and himself respecting an appointment so much incensed the earl that, regardless of all propriety, he turned his back upon his sovereign, on which Elizabeth in sudden anger gave him a box on the ear. The lord admiral interposed; but the estrangement continued for some months, Essex requiring an apology for the blow, which he declared that he would not have borne from Henry VIII., and could still less endure from a female sovereign. Essex returned, however, to court in March, 1599.

The affairs of Ireland had for some time occasioned Elizabeth great anxiety. The whole province of Ulster was in revolt under 'The O'Neil,' whom Elizabeth had some years previously rewarded for his services against rebels by the earldom of Tyrone, and with all the lands formerly possessed by his grandfather. Tyrone protested loyalty to the queen, but required religious liberty, and complained of acts of violence from the English governors, and the queen suspected that the interested policy of her officers had driven the Irish into rebellion. In August, 1598, Tyrone obtained a victory over the English commander-in-chief, who was slain with 1,500 of his followers.

Essex appeared willing to undertake the dangerous office of lord deputy; his enemies were eager to remove him from court, and the queen was induced to give him the appointment, with larger funds and a much more considerable army than had been intrusted to his predecessors, granting him also the power of pardoning all crimes, and of concluding peace at his discretion. The earl's known humanity, and his freedom from religious intolerance, gave reason to hope for better administration in Ireland; and, warlike as had been his disposition with regard to Spain, he appears to have been very desirous of effecting peace.

About the end of March, Essex left London for Ireland, surrounded by the flower of the English nobility, and attended by the acclamations of the people, with whom he was always a special favourite.¹ But he had not yet learnt the prudence necessary to those who serve so arbitrary a sovereign. In direct opposition to the queen, he gave the command of the cavalry to his friend the Earl of Southampton, who had offended her by his marriage, and it was not till the queen sent a second and more peremptory letter that he at last cancelled the appointment. It was, probably, not the fault of Essex that

¹ Jardine's 'Criminal Trials,' i. 297.

three summer months passed without more result than the reduction of two Irish castles and the feigned submission of three native chieftains ; but Elizabeth looked eagerly for the cessation of expenditure, and would not accept his apologies when he pleaded losses through desertion and disease. About the end of August, with a force insufficient for conquest, he met Tyrone on the banks of the Brenny, and concluded an armistice, promising to transmit to the queen the Irish demands, namely, toleration of the Catholic worship, and a share for the Irish of the lands and high offices of their country. But this conclusion of the campaign was highly distasteful to Elizabeth, and in her resentment on account of her wasted treasure, she even suspected Essex of interested aims to compass his own aggrandisement. On receiving her reproaches, Essex determined immediately to present himself before her, and sailed for England, leaving the government of Ireland to the Archbishop of Dublin and Sir George Carew. To the queen's astonishment, he entered her private apartment on September 28, and knelt down, travel-stained as he was, at her feet. Although greatly surprised, Elizabeth did not at first appear implacable ; but sterner counsels prevailed, and that evening Essex was ordered to keep his room, and was after a few days put under the ' free custody ' of the lord keeper.¹

The public voice was openly raised in his favour. He was vindicated both from the pulpit and in printed pamphlets ; still the queen appeared inexorable until he became ill, when she showed her sympathy by sending him a mess of broth, and recalled him to health by giving him hope of her returning favour. It was not till August 26, 1600, that the earl was allowed to be again at large, and even then he was directed not to appear at court without leave. The unmerited disgrace to which he had been subjected in no degree diminished the favour with which he was regarded by numerous friends. On his first arrest, he was urged by his attached friend, Lord Southampton, to leave England, and seek with him a new home on the Continent.

But Essex declared against spending the rest of his life in exile. He had formed a visionary plan that, at the head of a powerful party, he might succeed in driving his enemies from the Council, and become foremost with the queen. He consulted his friend Lord Mountjoy, who succeeded him in Ireland,

¹ A prisoner was said to be in ' free ' custody when he was permitted to remain in a private house, under the charge of a person who was responsible for his appearance.—Lingard, 366, note.

but could not obtain his approval. He ventured to ask the assistance of the King of Scots, insinuating that the queen's ministers were favourable to the Infanta, and James promised to support him.

Essex House, in the Strand, became the general rendezvous of the discontented. Roman Catholics and Puritans were welcomed there with equal cordiality, and numbers of citizens flocked thither to profit by the daily services of zealous Puritan divines. Desperate schemes were proposed by some military adventurers; for instance, to surprise the court and gain possession of the Tower—proposals which Essex and his friend Southampton at once rejected: their principal object appears to have been to remove Cecil, Cobham, and Raleigh from the queen's Council, and to obtain free access to their sovereign. On Sunday, February 8, Essex planned to join the lord mayor, aldermen, and city companies at the conclusion of the sermon, and to call on them to accompany him to the palace. But this rash act was prevented by the vigilance of the government. The queen sent a message warning the lord mayor to be careful of the city, and Lord Keeper Egerton and three other ministers went to Essex House to inquire the purpose for which a force had been collected there. It was with difficulty that the ministers obtained entrance. The earl urged, in excuse for his measures of defence, that a plot had been formed against his life.

Voices were raised against the ministers, and, on the plea of guarding them from molestation, Essex confined them in a room under guard. He then drew his sword and rushed into the street, followed by the Earls of Rutland and Southampton, Lords Sandys and Mounteagle, and about eighty knights and gentlemen, a party which was soon joined by the Earl of Bedford, Lord Cromwell, and about two hundred more.¹ He publicly declared that his object was self-defence, and that Lord Cobham and Sir Walter Raleigh threatened his life. But there was no meeting at St. Paul's Cross, and the citizens, by order of the lord mayor, remained at home. Meantime, the ministers felt serious alarm, knowing that the earl had many ardent adherents. The guards were mustered at the palace, the gates barricaded, and every passage strongly defended. The queen, who had no personal fear, was more courageous than her ministers. About two in the afternoon, Lord Burleigh, with a herald, and the Earl of Cumberland, ventured to enter different parts of the city, and proclaimed

¹ 'Through friendship or fear,' says Lingard, p. 385.

Essex a traitor, offering a reward of £1,000 for his apprehension, and a free pardon to any of his company who would return to their duty.

When Lord Essex at length returned by water to his house with fifty companions, he found that the lords whom he had left imprisoned had been set at liberty by a confidant who thus hoped to obtain the pardon of the government. As a last resource, Essex began to fortify his house, which was speedily surrounded by Royalists, headed by the lord admiral. A parley ensued between Sir Robert Sidney, standing in the garden, and Essex and Southampton, on the roof, and a respite of two hours was granted, that the ladies and their servants might retire. The battering-train arrived from the Tower, and the earls were again summoned to surrender. Lord Sandys proposed that they should make a desperate sally, and die, if die they must, sword in hand. But Essex, either still cherishing a hope of life or influenced by humanity, consented to surrender on the promise of a fair trial, expressing at the same time his hope that the queen would rather inflict on him all possible torments than punish those who had joined him from friendship and affection.¹

The Lords Essex and Southampton were taken immediately to the Tower, and the other conspirators were lodged in different prisons.

On February 19, the two earls were brought to trial in Westminster Hall, charged with high treason, before the lord steward and twenty-five other peers. It was impossible for the accused to deny that they had imprisoned the four councillors, had entered the city in arms, and had tried to excite an insurrection, with the design of overpowering the government. They could only allege in their defence that they never conspired against the queen's person, and had but prepared to defend themselves from anticipated attacks. An attempt to constrain and overrule the will of the sovereign, although without any design of causing personal injury, has been held treasonable down to the present time, and the court was unanimous in declaring them guilty. So great, however, was the esteem for Lord Essex, and so great the respect in which he was held at foreign courts, that the government desired to accumulate against him every proof of guilt. During that disgrace which the nation generally had thought undeserved, the pulpit had defended him; it was now desired that his conduct should be arraigned by the same authorities, and a curious

¹ See note W. at the end of Lingard, viii.

paper is preserved in the State Paper Office, entitled 'Directions to the Preachers,' which contains an exaggerated statement of the late occurrences, and much abuse of Essex.¹ It was imputed to him as a crime that he was favourable to religious toleration.²

The earl's high spirit was at last subdued. He sent for the lord keeper and the other councillors, and confessed his culpable ambition, not without some hope of pardon. It was thought possible that Elizabeth would not condemn a nobleman whom she had so highly favoured; but she signed the fatal warrant, and, on February 25, Essex was beheaded on the scaffold erected in the court of the Tower. He was only thirty-three years of age—the same age as Sir Philip Sidney, when he fell in battle—and the wife of Lord Essex was Sidney's widow. The Earl of Southampton was spared; but he remained a prisoner in the Tower until he at length regained both his liberty and his estates, at the beginning of the next reign. It is difficult to understand how a nobleman of the experience of Lord Essex could engage in an action so infatuated, and which the recent example of the Duke of Guise, when he temporarily prevailed over Henry III. at Paris, in May, 1588, certainly did not encourage. As 'the consistent friend of religious liberty,' the Earl of Essex has received Hallam's emphatic praise.³ It having appeared, from the confession of Essex, that Lord Mountjoy was his friend, the lord deputy feared that he might be viewed with suspicion; but Cecil, the son of Lord Burleigh, the queen's chief councillor, persuaded Elizabeth not to quarrel with the nobleman who was governing Ireland with vigour and success. Elizabeth sent Mountjoy a long and gracious letter concerning the sentence of Essex, expressed confidence in his loyalty, and advised him to take precautions against the new armament from Spain, which would probably soon invade Ireland. The apprehension was justified by the landing of 4,000 Spaniards, at Kinsale, on September 21. They were joined by Tyrone and several thousands of native Irish, and the papal bulls were again proclaimed; but Lord Mountjoy resisted their advance so successfully that the Spanish general was happy to effect his safe return to Corunna.⁴

There was an unusual gloom in the streets of London when

¹ Jardine, i. 369, note.

² Lingard, viii. 370.

³ 'Constitutional History,' i. 167. Lord Essex was kind and generous to his dependants. He endeavoured in vain to obtain from the queen some favour for the unfortunate Davison.

⁴ January 2, 1602.—Lingard, p. 382.

Elizabeth opened her last Parliament on October 27. The people still resented the execution of Lord Essex, and the queen missed the customary cheers. In consideration of the Irish expenses, a large supply was readily voted, but the great subject of discussion was the grievance of monopolies. By a 'monopoly' was understood a patent granted by the queen, which gave its possessor the sole privilege of selling any article. The needy courtiers had been thus enriched, while the people were impoverished by the high price of wine, oil, salt, coals, and other commodities. When the list of these articles was read, a member asked whether *bread* was not in the number? 'Nay,' replied he, 'but unless a remedy is found, *bread* will be added to the list.'

Warm debates followed on four days, and the shouts raised beyond the walls showed that the people took a deep interest in the matter. Elizabeth prudently determined to yield to these just demands, while it was still in her power to do so with dignity. Without waiting for the conclusion of the debates, she sent for the Speaker, and expressed her readiness to cancel those patents which excited the most discontent. The House of Commons warmly applauded this graceful concession, and sent a deputation to express their gratitude.

Elizabeth in return graciously thanked them for having made her aware of abuses of which she had been ignorant, declaring that the truth was too often disguised from princes. The queen's 'altered tone,' says Hallam, 'must be ascribed partly to the growing spirit she perceived in her subjects, but partly also to those cares which clouded with listless melancholy the last scenes of her illustrious life.'¹ Elizabeth had endeavoured, by active exertions beyond her powers, to ward off or disguise the signs of advancing age; but her decline was apparent, and the time was come when, according to her own expression, 'men would turn from the setting to look towards the rising sun.' She had forbidden discussions relating to the succession to her throne, but that now became of necessity the pressing subject of interest among the exiles abroad, as well as among the party who were in power at home. On the marriage of the Infanta of Spain to the Archduke Albert, the faction which had supported her visionary claim despaired of raising her to the English throne. Arabella Stuart,² first cousin of

¹ Hallam, i. 262. Aikin, ii. 489. Lingard, viii. 381.

² Hallam, p. 287. 'Arabella, though apparently of the Reformed religion, was rather suspected of wavering in her faith; and some entertained a hope of marrying her to the Cardinal Farnese, brother of the Duke of Parma.'

the King of Scotland, became the favourite of the Catholic party. Like King James, she was a great-grandchild of Margaret, elder sister of Henry VIII., and Parsons, the Jesuit, in his pamphlet concerning the succession, insisted that her claim was the better, she having been born in England. But, pending the discussion, a proclamation was published in the name of the queen, ordering all Jesuits and their adherents to quit the kingdom within thirty days. It set forth that, taking advantage of her clemency, Catholic priests had 'adventured to walk the streets at noonday,' countenancing the suspicion that she proposed to tolerate two religions, though she had been ignorant of any such imagination, and no one had ever ventured to suggest it to her.¹ The Catholic missionaries replied to this proclamation by an address which expressed their entire loyalty and willingness to pay to the queen the same obedience in civil causes as if she had been a Catholic ruler; but it is unknown how Elizabeth might have received this address, as she had become very ill before its presentation. The Lords of the Council and the Deputy of Ireland were anxious to end the war with Spain. They represented to Elizabeth that the Irish rebellion was supported by Spanish help, in the hope of exhausting her finances; and that it was in her power, by allowing Mountjoy to make some few concessions to Tyrone, to relieve herself from an intolerable burden. Elizabeth hesitated, disliking always to enter upon a treaty with rebels; but when Mountjoy became aware of her danger, he at once made terms with Tyrone, who renounced all dependence on foreign authority, and received a full pardon, with promise of the restitution of his lands.²

There was indeed little solace for Elizabeth in her decline. The highest position in the realm must always be lonely, unless comforted by family ties. In her case all these were wanting, while the usages of stern etiquette and the imperious temper which she inherited from her father, contributed to her painful isolation. Fearful of a disputed succession, she had persecuted those female relatives who dared to enter upon marriage contrary to her commands. And she had now survived many of those who had been once distinguished by her highest esteem. The Earl of Leicester, who had possessed more power than any other person over her capricious temper;³ his chivalrous nephew,

¹ Lingard, viii. 392.

² Tyrone had just entered on this engagement when the news of the queen's death reached Dublin. He bitterly lamented his own precipitancy, but renewed his submission; and the few Irish chiefs who refused the terms withdrew to the Continent to engage in foreign service.—Lingard, p. 393.

³ Hallam, i. 182.

Philip Sidney; Lord Burleigh, her leading minister during forty years (to whom alone she is said to have allowed the privilege of a seat in her presence, although even he used at times to complain of her harshness); and the Earl of Essex, whose impetuous conduct brought on him such severe punishment;—all these were gone, and Elizabeth could have no pleasure in thinking of that King of Scots, at present personally unknown to her, whom, had she known, she must have felt to be too awkward a pedant to preside over Cecil, Raleigh, and other cultivated men who adorned her court.¹

In January, 1603, Elizabeth became seriously ill. She had been heard to declare that she would leave the crown to the right heir, and it was understood that she concurred in the nomination of the King of Scots, at least by signs. She tranquilly expired on March 24, in her seventieth year, having been nearly forty-five years on the throne. The royal line of Tudor was now extinct, five sovereigns of that House having succeeded each other during the course of a hundred and eighteen years. The House of Stuart was next to begin its rule.

The last historian who has described this reign has detracted from the high estimate usually formed of Elizabeth's talents. 'It was not, however, her ability,' says Mr. Froude: 'it was the temper of the English nation which raised her to the high place which she ultimately filled. The genius and the daring of her Protestant subjects formed the splendid pedestal on which her own small figure was lifted into dignity.'² Yet, weak, vain, and fond of adulation as she was; infirm of purpose as she sometimes showed herself; the perplexity of her statesmen, and so imperious as to leave 'no doubting whose daughter she was,' Elizabeth, when called upon for independent action, gave signal proofs of high ability and courage. 'Her behaviour,' says Dr. Arnold, on the other hand, writing several years ago, 'when she passed through the city in state on the day preceding her coronation, or when, thirty years afterwards, she harangued her troops at Tilbury, or when at the end of her reign she granted so gracefully the petition of the House of Commons against monopolies, was all of the same character—the gracious and noble bearing of a sovereign feeling herself at once beloved and respected, knowing the greatness of her place, and sincerely, if not habitually, appreciating its duties. Conspiracy at home and open war abroad, the excommunications of Rome, the armadas of Spain, the assassination plots of the

¹ See Lord Macaulay's 'Burleigh and his Times,' *Essays*, i. 472.

² *History*, v. 431.

Catholics, only bound her people's love to her more firmly. The arbitrary acts and still more arbitrary language, the severities, illegalities, and cruelties of her Government towards the parties who opposed her,—the people at large forgot or approved. Nothing was unjust, nothing was cruel against the enemies of one whom the nation so loved; the almost universal voice of England called for the death of Mary Stuart, because the people believed her life to be incompatible with the safety of their beloved queen.¹

The language used in addressing Elizabeth was always remarkably submissive, and the adulation paid to her more gross than that employed in France towards Louis XIV. 'Hypocritical adulation was so prevalent in that age that the want of it passed for rudeness.' - 'The doctrine of our present English constitution, that some one must be responsible for every act of the crown, was as yet perfectly unknown;' and it was part of Elizabeth's character to put herself in the prominent place, although she was above censure.

But when, in 1576, Mr. Peter Wentworth boldly inveighed in the House against interference with the freedom of debate in the queen's name, and even taxed the queen with ingratitude and unkindness, he was not subjected to a severer punishment than a month's confinement in the Tower. The government of England was a monarchy bounded by law, and no permanent law was imposed, or any internal tax levied, without the consent of the House of Commons.² The authority of Elizabeth rested solely on the support of her people, and her parsimony, ungenerous towards her subordinates, injurious to the public service in its extreme, did not render her administration the less popular. She rarely troubled her subjects for money, had restored the currency, had punctually paid the debts of the three preceding reigns, and her credit stood so high at Antwerp that in the year 1576 she could obtain a loan at five per cent., when Philip of Spain could not borrow on any terms.³ Occasionally, indeed, Elizabeth did not abstain from the ancient practice of borrowing by demand from the wealthy—an exaction which a statute of Richard III. had plainly forbidden. But she appears to have been punctual in making speedy repayment according to stipulation, 'a virtue somewhat unusual with royal

¹ Dr. Arnold's 'Lectures on Modern History,' pp. 213-223.

² See Hallam, i. 255, 256, 278. In chapter v. of the 'Constitutional History,' Hallam carefully reviews the principal parliamentary discussions of this reign, refuting Hume's representations of a state of tyranny resembling that of Turkey. See a long note at p. 279.

³ Froude, v. 43.

debtors.’¹ Such loans were but an anticipation of her regular revenue, and the rich merchants from whom they were obtained were recompensed with knighthood and gracious words. When we consider the small extent of England at that period, not united with, but frequently opposed to Scotland, and with a constant succession of foes in Ireland, its preservation and even rapid improvement in resources during its many troubles appear marvellous. Unallied and alone, ‘Queen Elizabeth maintained a glorious war against the greatest power and the richest potentate in Europe. She took from him the empire of the sea; she fixed it in herself. She rendered all the projects of universal monarchy vain, and shook to the foundations the most exorbitant power which ever disturbed the peace or threatened the liberties of Europe.’² For this great success the country was indebted to ‘the genius and daring’ of her people and their naval commanders. The continued jealousy between France and Spain favoured the Protestant interests of England, but there was great danger about the year 1581 that both these powers might unite with Scotland against her.³

The recent discoveries of countries on the other side of the globe, and the success of adventurers, stimulated commercial enterprise, and diffused a new energy among all classes. In 1586, Thomas Cavendish, a gentleman of some property in Suffolk, emulating the fame of Sir Francis Drake, sailed across the Atlantic with three small vessels, reached the Pacific Ocean by the Straits of Magellan, and after some success on the coast, captured a Spanish treasure-ship from the Manillas, and returned to England in triumph, after having made in rather more than two years the circuit of the globe. He sailed up the Thames with a topsail of cloth of gold, and Elizabeth conferred knighthood upon him. He attempted a similar expedition three years later, but it proved disastrous, and he perished at sea. ‘The activity of the nation,’ says Dr. Arnold, ‘found its employment in war, or in trade, or in writing—for the mass of writers in Elizabeth’s reign was enormous.’ The romance called ‘Arcadia’ was written by Sir Philip Sidney; ‘The History of the World’ by Raleigh. Edmund Spenser, who was the friend of both these, was interred in Westminster Abbey in 1598, at the charge, it is said, of the Earl of Essex. Most of the plays of Shakspeare were produced upon the stage during this reign. Few particular references are to be found in them, but the adventurous spirit of the age has not escaped his comprehensive observation—

¹ Hallam, p. 244.

² Lord Bolingbroke.

³ Froude, v. 430.

‘He wondered that your lordship
 Would suffer him to spend his youth at home,
 While other men, of slender reputation,
 Put forth their sons to seek preferment out :
 Some to the wars, to try their fortune there ;
 Some to discover islands far away ;
 Some to the studious universities.’¹

Elizabeth sent an embassy to solicit the protection of the Great Mogul for those of her subjects who might visit the East, and, without awaiting his reply, granted a charter authorising the purchase of lands. Such was the commencement of the first company of English merchants who founded a settlement in the East Indies for the purpose of trade—an undertaking in which they encountered much opposition from Portuguese settlers.

As yet England had little produce of her own with which to purchase the spices, cotton, and gems of India ; the rich carpets and silks of Turkey and Persia ; or the sugar and precious metals which were already brought from the New World. Woollen cloths and fustians were the chief products of English looms, and notwithstanding her mines of tin and iron, England obtained from the Continent knives and buttons, even pins and needles.²

Difference of rank was at this period made evident by dress. A nobleman was known by his cloak, by the plumes which he wore in his hat, and by the jewels which sparkled in his shoes. The tailor and goldsmith thus set the mark of gentility, a mark now scarcely visible, or restricted to evening assemblies and court parade.³

The ill-advised attempt to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne had not only destroyed the life of that innocent lady, but also wrecked the happiness of her sisters. Elizabeth continued to look with jealousy on her relations of the House of Suffolk, whom her father had preferred in his will to that of Stuart. On finding, in 1560, that the Lady Catharine Grey had privately married the Earl of Hertford, Elizabeth sent both of them to the Tower ; and the Star Chamber sentenced the earl to pay an enormous fine. Although strong remonstrances were raised against this tyranny, the Lady Catharine continued in disgrace until her death seven years afterwards.⁴ The younger

¹ *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, act 1, scene iii.

² Froude's 'Elizabeth,' ii. 430, and *note*.

³ See 'Chronicles of Clovernook,' by Douglas Jerrold.

⁴ There was a son of this clandestine marriage—Lord Beauchamp, heir of the House of Suffolk. He was named to the queen when she was on her death-bed, when

sister, Lady Mary Grey, resided at court until, in 1565, she ventured to contract a private marriage with Mr. Thomas Keys, gentleman porter of the queen's household, a widower, and the father of several children. This unfortunate marriage took place at Westminster, at nine o'clock in the evening. But if Lady Mary hoped to escape punishment through the obscurity of a connection which seemed for ever to distance her from the throne, she was bitterly disappointed. No member of the queen's family, however distantly allied, was allowed to degrade herself with impunity. The unhappy pair were separately imprisoned, Keys in the Fleet prison, Lady Mary under the lighter custody of Mr. Hawtrey, a wealthy gentleman, possessing a pleasant residence at the foot of the Chiltern Hills, from which she was afterwards transferred for a time to the care of her grandmother, the aged Duchess of Suffolk; and the last years of her life were passed at the residence of Sir Thomas Gresham, in Bishopsgate Street. When there she heard, in 1571, of the death of her unfortunate husband, and at her request Sir Thomas wrote to Lord Burleigh, asking permission for her to bring up poor Keys' orphan children, and herself to wear mourning. The result of this petition is unknown.

Lady Mary lived six years longer, dying in London, and leaving little besides her favourite books, some of which were in French and Italian.

The learning of the Lady Jane has been recorded. Both Queen Mary and Elizabeth were well versed in languages, and Elizabeth could converse in Italian and read both Latin and Greek.

she had but just strength enough to exclaim against having 'a rascal's son' to succeed her.—*Lingard*, viii. 397.

APPENDIX.

EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN IRELAND—ST. PATRICK: IN WALES: IN THE NORTH—
VENERABLE BEDE.

THE Roman writers have given no distinct record of the state of Ireland. No proconsul set his foot on the land of the wild Scots who were the dreaded enemies of the people of our larger island, and the first gleams of light concerning it are collected from the reports of monks, whose narrations are sometimes conflicting. It appears to have been about the year 403 that an Irish pirate extended his incursions into Gaul, where he captured, some say at Boulogne, a youth of sixteen, whom he carried off to Antrim and sold to a chief named Milcho.

This youth, who was afterwards called Patrick, had not been born in servitude. He was the son of Calpurnius, a deacon, and his mother claimed relationship to St. Martin of Tours.¹

To a youth of honourable lineage, who had received some instruction, the task of a shepherd on the downs of Antrim became unbearable.

After six years of that drudgery he escaped, traversed Ireland, and from the southern coast obtained a passage to Brittany in a merchant vessel. In Gaul he soon made his way to his home, and after further training in monastic schools, attached himself to St. Germain of Auxerre, who in 431 sent him to Rome. The next year, after being consecrated a bishop, Patrick returned as a missionary to that country to which nearly thirty years before he was brought as a slave. He hastened to Antrim, eager to convert his old master, but found no success in his case, although in other directions his converts were very numerous. He continued to preach Christianity in Ireland more than thirty years, and a considerable number of schools and Christian communities were established before his death. St. Patrick was as prominently the patron of Irish Christianity as Augus-

¹ The birthplace of St. Patrick has been a subject of dispute. Lingard believed that he was born at Killpatrick, a village near Glasgow; Montalembert calls him a captive from Gaul; and Dr. Lanigan has decided for Boulogne.—'Saints of the West,' ii. 387, and Moore's 'History of Ireland,' i. 211.

tine was of that of England more than a hundred years later, although it appears that neither was the first Christian missionary. Palladius, a Briton, is said to have preached in Ireland with some success in 430, and to have built three churches, but he was driven away by heathen animosity.¹

These churches were humble buildings of wattles, clay, and thatch, which could be quickly put together.² So well, however, did the Irish monasteries prosper that their schools were joined by monks from Gaul and Rome, and attained great celebrity. The principal classic authors were studied at Bangor and Clonfert, and some time was devoted to Greek literature.³ Ireland, which received Patrick from Gaul, sent in return to Gaul the missionary Columbanus, born about 543, who planted monasteries near the Vosges mountains, and helped to reclaim lands from the wilderness.⁴ It was also about 565 when Columba, an Irish saint sometimes called Columkill, after instituting what was termed a noble monastery at Derry, being persecuted by some of the Irish princes, sought out a more secure resting place, and formed a sacred community at Iona, or Icolmkill, a rugged island of the Scottish Hebrides, the ruins of which still remain. The monastery was at length destroyed by an invasion of the Northmen after an existence of nearly two hundred years.

At the close of the eighth century the rapacious Northmen, or Ostmen, began to settle on the Irish coasts from Antrim to Limerick, and the principal Irish cities were built by them.

Ireland had never been ruled by one powerful sovereign. Below the petty kings, chiefs exercised a kind of feudal sway, and wars and contention respecting inheritance were continual.

Consequently, in the twelfth century Ireland no longer held an honourable place among European nations. There was no commerce, no cultivation of art, and the Irish people fled from the towns held by the Northmen, preferring to dwell in cabins among the bogs and mountains.⁵ No Egbert or Athelstan had bound them under one rule; no William the Conqueror had put down all tyranny but his own.

This state of disorder was the plea made by Henry II. in 1155 when asking the Pope to sanction his intended expedition to reclaim the ignorant Irish people, and he obtained from the pontiff a sanction of which he delayed to avail himself till nearly twenty years later, when a domestic quarrel among the kings opened the door to the English invaders.⁶

The Irish Church also was without organisation, the bishops being dependent on the larger monasteries, and, among the many hostile divisions,

¹ See an article on St. Patrick in the 'Saturday Review,' March 25, 1876, in which the credible is carefully separated from fictitious statements.

² Lanigan's 'Ecclesiastical History,' quoted in Moore's 'History of Ireland,' p. 220, *note*.

³ Montalembert's 'Saints of the West,' ii. 390. Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' ii. 508.

⁴ Authorities differ respecting the date of Columbanus. According to Montalembert ('Saints of the West,' ii.), he was born in 543 in Ireland, 'the same year in which St. Benedict died in Italy,' and he died in Lombardy in 615.

⁵ Hallam's 'Constitutional History,' ii. 509. Some skill in music may be recorded, and the harp continued for ages to be Ireland's symbol.

⁶ See vol. i. p. 113.

one central authority was greatly needed. But any plans of systematic rule on the part of Henry were suspended when alarm for the consequences of the murder of Becket recalled him with haste to Normandy. He hoped to establish his son John as 'Lord of Ireland,' but John's ill manners could not be borne by the chiefs, and he was soon recalled to England, while an English colony of settlers added fresh fuel to Irish dissensions.

Wales, as well as Ireland, had in the sixth century a monastery, at a place called Bangor—not the city still existing in the county of Caernarvon, but a spot on the river Dee, in Flintshire, where now stands a village. In Bangor Monastery lived Gildas, born probably about 519, one of England's earliest historians, who in the Latin tongue, the only vehicle for the literature of that day, inveighed alike against the pusillanimity of the Britons in allowing Pagan Saxons to settle in the land, and against the vices of the monks, his associates. The convents could not be exempt from the prevailing vices, but we must believe them to have been asylums where both men and women of high rank frequently took refuge from danger, and in their schools the Latin language was preserved and boys were trained to be priests. Bangor in Flintshire is said to have been like a walled town in its extent: it was about eight miles from Chester, and contained twelve hundred monks. We hear nothing of its erection, but of the sad time of its destruction, when, in 607, Ethelfrith, King of Bernicia, who was preparing to attack the Welsh forces, beholding the twelve hundred monks of Bangor drawn up in array in the attitude of prayer, determined to begin the conflict by the massacre of those whom he probably dreaded as magicians. The destruction of the monastery soon followed, and a large library, 'the repository of the most precious monuments of the ancient Britons,' was thus lost to the world.¹

In 596, when Augustine came as a missionary to the King of Kent, Mercia, in the centre of England, was Pagan, and Northumberland was Christian and Pagan by turns.

Oswald, a Christian prince, flying from the fierce King Penda of Mercia, took refuge for a time in the holy island of Iona, and when in 635 he became king of the northern province of the Heptarchy, he sent to Iona for a missionary to instruct his people in true religion.

Aidan obeyed the call, and at Lindisfarne, on the north coast of the present county of Durham, a Holy Island was found somewhat resembling Iona, where a monastery was built which became the centre of many churches. It is interesting to hear that King Oswald accompanied his friend Bishop Aidan when he went about preaching to the country people, as his interpreter, for Oswald had learnt Gaelic whilst in refuge at Iona, and Aidan knew not the English speech. In the middle of the seventh century, the Abbot of Iona was the high-priest of the Christians of Northumbria, and the numerous northern monasteries, like the Irish Church, were in many respects independent communities. At Whitby Monastery a great council was held in 664, to decide the points of difference between the Irish and Roman churches. Besides paltry questions respecting the

¹ Sharon Turner's 'History of the Anglo-Saxons,' i. 334. In the Welsh Triads Bangor is said to have contained 2,400 religious persons.

time of keeping Easter, there was a serious difference in church organisation. The stricter rule brought from Rome by the clergy who settled in Kent prevailed over that of the missionaries from Iona. Benedict Biscop soon afterwards erected a church and monastery at Wearmouth, for which he brought masons and painters from France, the first workmen of their kind, we are told, who came to Britain.¹ Another monastery was soon afterwards erected at Jarrow, a few miles from Wearmouth, on the river Don. These two monasteries have gained fame as the place of education and the residence of that indefatigable scholar the Venerable Bede,² who spent his mature life at Jarrow, where he is said to have instructed at the same time six hundred scholars. When there was no printing-press the pen was diligently plied in monasteries to multiply books. There was also no paper. During many centuries that want was supplied in the East by slips of a large reed called the papyrus, found in the rivers of Egypt and Syria, which, when glued together, were formed into scrolls. But the papyrus was scarce and dear, and parchment made from the skins of sheep or calves was the substance chiefly used in Europe.

This material was so valuable that one author's words were in many cases erased in order to make a fair sheet for another writer.³ And yet so far was the ancient world from being destitute of books that the finest works of poetry and eloquence, now the most studied and admired, besides the sacred Scriptures, existed only in this uncouth form. The Old and New Testaments had been translated before this time into Latin from the Hebrew and Greek, which were probably known to very few residents in Britain; but Bede had some knowledge of the Greek language, and did not despise the study of those Latin writers whose works, because written before the Christian era, have been called profane. While studying the Scriptures, keeping strictly the rule of his monastery, and joining in the daily chant, Bede gave the rest of his time, in his own words, 'to learning, teaching and writing,' and left behind him works in which he had carefully collected all then known of the form and history of the British islands, and of the sciences of philosophy, medicine, music, and arithmetic.

All these great works were compiled in the Latin language, and as far as possible were written by himself. His 'Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation' gave the first record of the arrival of Augustine for the conversion of Kent, and of events the memory of which might otherwise have perished. More than a hundred years later, when the devastation wrought by Danish inroads appeared to make the improvement of England still more distant, our King Alfred undertook the task of translating Bede's history into Saxon English. Later in life Bede wished that at least the New Testament should not remain a sealed book to those who only knew their native language, and began to translate into English the Gospel of St. John. Although not more than sixty years of age, he was enfeebled by ill-health, and was compelled to employ a scholar to write from his dic-

¹ The church was begun in the year 674. See Dean Stanley's lecture 'On the Early Christianity of Northumbria.'

² See vol. i. p. 16.

³ A MS. cleared of writing for further use was called a palimpsest.

tation. It seemed doubtful whether he could live to finish the last chapter of the Gospel, when his scribe told him that only one more sentence was wanting:—'Write it quickly,' said Bede. 'It is finished now,' said the pupil: 'It is indeed so,' replied the master, who had just strength remaining to join in the evening chant before he drew his last breath.¹

More than six hundred years afterwards, Wyclif, the rector of Lutterworth, undertook the same work of putting the Gospels into English.

After the death of Bede there was a long period of disorder and misrule. Within the lapse of a hundred years only one of the fourteen kings of Northumbria died as its sovereign; the others were slain or forced to fly. In the year 793 the church and monastery at Holy Island were totally destroyed by a Danish incursion, and in 867 it appeared as if the Danes had finally obtained the rule of that part of England.² But the works written by Bede were happily spared.

A late humorous writer contrasted the influence of literature and war, as that of Captain Sword and Captain Pen. The sword appears far the stronger, but the effects of the pen are surely more enduring. War engenders wars, the names of the combatants often perishing in a confused record of misery. But the works of the pen, inscribed on the sheets of the water-plant, or on the skins of sheep, have lived on for centuries, and apparently will never die, being valued for their antiquity even when succeeded by the writings of those who have lived in more fortunate times.

¹ In the year 735, according to the Saxon Chronicle.

² Scott's 'Antiquities,' ii. 144. Lingard, i. 113. Eighteen bishops of Lindisfarne have been enumerated: its possessions were afterwards transferred to Chester, and finally, in the reign of Henry VIII., to Durham.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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